

**PACIFIC GROVE UNIFIED SCHOOL DISTRICT
BOARD OF EDUCATION
REGULAR MEETING: THURSDAY, JUNE 2, 2022**

Mission Statement

Pacific Grove Unified School District, in partnership with the community and with a focus on equity, will challenge every student by providing a quality instructional program in a positive, safe and stimulating environment. The District will meet the diverse needs of all students by ensuring exceptional learning opportunities to acquire and apply the knowledge and skills that develop the insight and character necessary for a productive and rewarding life.

**PACIFIC GROVE UNIFIED SCHOOL DISTRICT BOARD OF EDUCATION
Minutes of Regular Meeting of June 2, 2022 – District Office/Virtual**

I. OPENED BUSINESS

- A. Called to Order 5:12 p.m.
- B. Roll Call
- | | |
|---|--|
| President: | Trustee Cristy Dawson (CD) |
| Clerk: | Trustee Frank Rivera (FR) |
| Trustee(s) Present: | Trustee John Paff (JP) Trustee Brian Swanson (BS) Trustee Carolyn Swanson (CS) |
| Trustee(s) Virtual At Alternate Location: | |
| Trustee(s) Absent: | |
| Administration Present: | Superintendent Porras Asst. Superintendent Chin-Bendib |
| Board Recorder: | Alyssa Rodriguez |
| Student Board Member: | Gabriella Gaona |
- C. Adopted Agenda REVISED
- Consent B: Certificated Assignment Order #18 with additional new hired employees
Consent J: Amount of behavior technicians increased to four positions needed.
- MOTION FR / CS to adopt agenda as presented.**
Public comment: None
Motion CARRIED by roll call vote 5-0

II. CLOSED SESSION

- A. Identify Closed Session Topics
- The Board of Education will meet in Closed Session to consider matters appropriate for Closed Session in accordance with Education and Government Code.
1. Public Employee Discipline/Dismissal/Release/Complaint [Government Code § 54957]
 2. Student discipline or other confidential student matters [Education Code Sections 35146, 48918, 48900 et seq., 48912(b) and 49060 et seq., and 20 U.S.C. Section 1232g]
 3. Superintendent Goals and Evaluation
 4. Conference with Labor Negotiators – Assistant Superintendent employment contract for 2022-23 – Compensation; public school employer and its designated representatives: Ralph Gómez Porras, Superintendent [Gov. Code §54957.6]
- B. Public comment on Closed Session Topics: None

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C. Adjourn to Closed Session *Time: 5:16 PM*

III. RECONVENE IN OPEN SESSION *Time: 6:46 PM*

A. Report action taken in Closed Session:

For all items: Information taken and direction given. No Action taken.

1. Public Employee Discipline/Dismissal/Release/Complaint [Government Code § 54957]
2. Student discipline or other confidential student matters [Education Code Sections 35146, 48918, 48900 et seq., 48912(b) and 49060 et seq., and 20 U.S.C. Section 1232g]
3. Superintendent Goals and Evaluation
4. Conference with Labor Negotiators – Assistant Superintendent employment contract for 2022-23 - Compensation; public school employer and its designated representatives: Ralph Gómez Porras, Superintendent [Gov. Code §54957.6]

B. Pledge of Allegiance

IV. SCHOOL RESOURCE OFFICER UPDATE

Chief Madalone and School Resource Officer (SRO) Hankes provided a brief update to the Board and community regarding the work completed by our SRO this past year, as well as goals for the upcoming school year. Site Principals gave kudos to SRO Hankes and showed support for the SRO program.

V. COMMUNICATIONS

A. Written Communication

- CD: Regarding being in favor/against masks; protest in front of Robert Down Elementary; school safety after recent events

B. Board Member Comments

- CD: Mentioned attending all graduations. Thanked all admin. Kudos to Barbara Martinez on her role in school safety. Presented story about Conrad High School Principal feeding and tending to horses brought to school by students.
- FR: Enjoyed attending graduations. Mentioned at Adult School ESL graduation there was 17 different countries and 13 different languages represented. Congratulated all students.
- CS: Interested in figuring out how to reduce gun violence at the Board level. Would like to make that a future agenda item. Asked about sending out a letter to educate families on safe gun storage at home.
- BS: Enjoyed attending graduation events.

C. Superintendent Report

Kudos to all PGUSD staff. Kudos to Larry Haggquist taking on leadership role. Kudos to grounds team for setup and breakdown of all end-of-the-year events.

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- D. PGUSD Staff Comments (Non Agenda Items)
- Ani Silva: Grateful for Equity Training this past week.
 - Song Chin-Bendib: Kudos to maintenance, operations, grounds, and custodians for all their behind-the-scenes work they did for even setup and cleanup.
 - Clare Davies: Mentioned summer school is off to a wonderful start. Gave thanks to summer school staff.

VI. INDIVIDUALS DESIRING TO ADDRESS THE BOARD

- None

VII. CONSENT AGENDA

- A. Minutes of May 19, 2022 Board Meeting
- B. Certificated Assignment Order #18
- C. Classified Assignment Order #18
- D. Acceptance of Donations
- E. Cash Receipts Report No. 7
- F. Revolving Cash Report No. 2
- G. Online Subscription with DocuSign Electronic Signature Services
- H. Approval of Actuarial Study of Retiree Health Liabilities Under GASB 74/75 for fiscal year 2021-22
- I. Contract for Services with EMS LINO / Titan School Solutions
- J. Contract with Positive Behavior Supports Corporation (PBS)
- K. Amended Parent Mileage Reimbursement
- L. Contracted Services with California Towing and Transport
- M. Contracted Services with Discovery Charters for School Field Trips
- N. Contracted Services with Discovery Charters-Athletics
- O. Contracted Services with Field of Dreams
- P. Contracted Services with Jet Mulch Inc
- Q. Contracted Services with M3 Environmental Consulting
- R. Contract for Services with MoGo Urgent Care
- S. Contract for Services with Monterey Bay Pest Control
- T. Contract for Services with Monterey Fire Extinguisher
- U. Contract for Services with Wilson's Plumbing
- V. Contract for Services with Richard Enriquez, Certified Driver Instructor
- W. Contract for Services with Ruben Parra, Bus Driver Trainer
- X. Memorandum of Understanding with Salinas City Elementary School District for Field Trips and Athletics Transportation
- Y. Contract for Services with Stark Leak Detection LLC
- Z. Contracted Services with Coast Counties Truck and Equipment
- AA. Agreement for Services with the City of Pacific Grove for a School Resource Officer (SRO)
- BB. Robert H. Down Elementary 2022-23 Single Plan for Student Achievement (SPSA)
- CC. Forest Grove Elementary School Plan for Student Achievement 2022-23
- DD. Pacific Grove Middle School Single Plan for Student Achievement for 2022-23
- EE. Pacific Grove High School Single Plan for Student Achievement for 2022-2023
- FF. Pacific Grove Community High School Single Plan for Student Achievement for 2022-2023
- GG. Quarterly Report on Williams Uniform Complaints
- HH. Contract for Services with Premier Studios of California
- II. Contract for Services with Pacific West Water Purification, Inc.
- JJ. Contract with Grade Break Inc for the asphalt paving at David Avenue
- KK. Contract for Services to Wilson's Plumbing and Heating for Adult School Sewer Line Repair

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- LL. Proposal for Services - Lopez Tree Service
- MM. Proposal for Pacific Grove High School Pool Covers with Lincoln
- NN. Contract for Service with Home Campus, for the 2022-23 School Year

Consent Items B, J, and II pulled by the Board

MOTION FR/JP to adopt Consent Agenda WITHOUT Item B, J, and II as presented

Public comment: *None*

Move: BS Second: JP Roll Call Vote: 5 - 0
Trustees: Dawson Y Rivera Y Paff Y B. Swanson Y C. Swanson Y

Consent Item B: Certificated Assignment Order #18

Board Comments/Questions:

- CS: *Gave thanks and appreciation to Ani Silva; Congratulated Buck Roggeman on change of assignment.*
- JP: *Wanted to confirm Megan Coleman and Rachel McNickle will be job sharing.*
- BS: *Kudos to Ani Silva for her work over the years. Congratulated Buck Roggeman on change of assignment..*

Public Comment:

- *None*

Motion CS/FR to adopt Consent Item B:

Move: CS Second: FR Roll Call Vote: 5 - 0
Trustees: Dawson Y Rivera Y Paff Y B. Swanson Y C. Swanson Y

Consent Item J: Contract with Positive Behavior Supports Corporation (PBS)

Board Comments/Questions:

- *None*

Public Comment:

- *None*

Motion CD/JP to adopt Consent Item J:

Move: CD Second: JP Roll Call Vote: 5 - 0
Trustees: Dawson Y Rivera Y Paff Y B. Swanson Y C. Swanson Y

Consent Item II: Contract for Services with Pacific West Water Purification, Inc.

Board Comments/Questions:

- *CS: Recused herself.*

Public Comment:

- *None*

Motion CD/FR to adopt Consent Item II:

Move: CD Second: FR Roll Call Vote: 4 - 0 - 1
Trustees: Dawson Y Rivera Y Paff Y B. Swanson Y C. Swanson _____

VIII. PUBLIC HEARING I

Public Hearing of the District General Fund Budget and All Other Funds for fiscal year 2022-23

Recommendation: (Song Chin-Bendib, Assistant Superintendent) The District Administration recommends that the Board hold a public hearing for the District General Fund Budget and all other Funds for fiscal year 2022-23.

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Open Public Hearing: 7:43 PM

Close Public Hearing: 8:15 PM

Board Comments/Questions:

- JP: Questioned property tax values for May. Asked if the state has promised money for transportation.
- BS: Asked if there was any word on money coming from government. When is the last time there was an increase in LCFF money? How does PGUSD money reserves compare to Carmel Unified School District?
- FR: Asked about Before and After School Recreation Program (BASRP) funds for preschool. Asked if families should be surveyed to see if there is a need for summer BASRP.
- CS: Asked about if there will be an increase in base of LCFF. How far are we from the ADA point? Confirmed if the budget was settled.

Public Comment:

- None

No action taken.

IX. PUBLIC HEARING II

Public Hearing for the Local Control Accountability Plan and State Local Priorities 2022-2023

Recommendation: (Ani Silva, Director of Curriculum and Special Projects) The District Administration recommends the Board hold a public hearing of the final draft of the Local Control Accountability Plan (LCAP) and LCAP 2019-2020, Learning Continuity Plan Update 2021-2022 and State Local Priorities 2022-2023.

Open Public Hearing: 8:15 PM

Close Public Hearing: 9:09 PM

Board Comments/Questions:

- JP: Inquired about what students are eligible for recovery classes and how do they go about being enrolled. Felt there is lack of comparison to last year.
- CD: How is the SEL survey administered and how are results interpreted? Question on the confidential report form. Appreciative of all support available to the students.
- FR: Expressed appreciation for responding to community needs.
- CS: Asked about student athletes having PE waivers. If so, how will those students be provided health class education. Asked if chromebooks and hotspots were available to families. Would like to see the possibility of universal screening of dyslexia.
- BS: Kudos to presentation. Liked the idea of bringing in bilingual educators from the Adult School.

Public Comment:

- None

No action taken.

X. PUBLIC HEARING III/ACTION/DISCUSSION A

Public Hearing and Adoption of Elementary Social Studies Curriculum, Studies Weekly

Recommendation: (Ani Silva, Director of Curriculum and Special Projects) The District Administration recommends the Board review and approves the adoption of the Elementary Social Studies curriculum, Studies Weekly.

Open Public Hearing: 9:10 PM

Close Public Hearing: 9:20 PM

Board Comments/Questions:

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- JP: Questioned the total cost of the curriculum. Asked what grades does this curriculum serve.
- CS: Requested to see the contract. How was the curriculum chosen? Were parents opinions surveyed? Appreciates the thoroughness the faculty went through in the process of choosing the curriculum.
- CD: Appreciative of piloting process.

Public Comment:

- None

Move: CD Second: FR Roll Call Vote: 4 - 1
Trustees: Dawson Y Rivera Y Paff N B. Swanson Y C. Swanson Y

XI. ACTION/DISCUSSION

B. District Update on Response to COVID-19

Board Comments/Questions:

- *The board was in favor of what is in place for threshold and mask requirements at this time. The board will call about a meeting should the CDC recommendations change.*

Public Comment:

- None

No Action Taken.

C. Response to the 2021-22 Monterey County Civil Grand Jury Final Report-"Excellence in Action: Monterey County's Educational Response to Covid-19"

Board Comments/Questions:

- None

Public Comment:

- None.

Motion to approve as presented.

Move: CS Second: JP Roll Call Vote: 5 - 0
Trustees: Dawson Y Rivera Y Paff Y B. Swanson Y C. Swanson Y

D. Measure A Technology Bond Citizens' Oversight Committee Report

Board Comments/Questions:

- None

Public Comment:

- None

Motion to approve as presented.

Move: JP Second: CD Roll Call Vote: 5 - 0
Trustees: Dawson Y Rivera Y Paff Y B. Swanson Y C. Swanson Y

E. Approval of Measure A (Ed Tech Bond) Education Technology Expenditures

Board Comments/Questions:

- JP: *Is the list missing anything we should be making a priority? How are chromebooks holding up?*
- CD: *Appreciative of thoroughness.*

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Public Comment:

- *None*

Motion to approve as presented.

Move: JP Second: BS Roll Call Vote: 5 - 0
Trustees: Dawson Y Rivera Y Paff Y B. Swanson Y C. Swanson Y

F. A-G Improvement Grant Plan

Board Comments/Questions:

- *None*

Public Comment:

- *None*

Motion to approve as presented.

Move: FR Second: CD Roll Call Vote: 5 - 0
Trustees: Dawson Y Rivera Y Paff Y B. Swanson Y C. Swanson Y

G. Contract with McDonnell Roofing, Inc. for the Monterey Bay Charter School Roof and Gutter Replacement

Board Comments/Questions:

- *BS: Wanted to confirm the project went out for bid.*
- *JP: Concerned about there not being a current long term plan for the facility.*

Public Comment:

- *None*

Motion to approve as presented.

Move: CD Second: FR Roll Call Vote: 5 - 0
Trustees: Dawson Y Rivera Y Paff Y B. Swanson Y C. Swanson Y

H. Pacific Grove Middle School Woodshop Roof Replacement

Board Comments/Questions:

- *JP: Wanted to know what the site intends to use the room for.*

Public Comment:

- *None*

Motion to approve as presented.

Move: BS Second: JP Roll Call Vote: 5 - 0
Trustees: Dawson Y Rivera Y Paff Y B. Swanson Y C. Swanson Y

MOTION CD / FR to extend the meeting until 11:00 p.m.

Public comment: *None*

Move: CD Second: FR Roll Call Vote: 5 - 0
Trustees: Dawson Y Rivera Y Paff Y B. Swanson Y C. Swanson Y

I. Contract for Services with Satellite Painting of Robert Down Elementary School

Board Comments/Questions:

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- *JP: What color? When in the summer will this project be carried out?*
- *CS: Wanted to confirm the contract did not include the brown portables. Is there led paint mitigation included?*
- *CD: Interested in looking at paint color options.*
- *BS: Not opposed to looking at different paint color options.*

Public Comment:

- *None*

Motion to approve as presented with the request of seeing other color options.

Move: CD Second: FR Roll Call Vote: 5 - 0

Trustees: Dawson Y Rivera Y Paff Y B. Swanson Y C. Swanson Y

J. Board Calendar/Future Meetings

Board Comments/Questions:

- *None*

Public Comment:

- *None*

No Action Taken.

XII. INFORMATION/DISCUSSION

A. The Governor's May Revision of the 2022-23 State Budget

Board Questions/Comments:

- *JP: \$1500 per ADA? Is it restricted for use in any manner?*

Public Comment:

- *None*

Board Direction:

- *None*

B. Universal Pre-kindergarten Initial Plan

Board Questions/Comments:

- *JP: Had budget clarification questions. Questions on equity.*
- *CD: Commented on possible reconfiguration. Equity is important in decision making of this plan.*
- *CS: Wanted to make sure special education students are being considered in this process.*

Public Comment:

- *Erica Chavez: Regardless of which option the district chooses to go, the least amount of transition is ideal for the students.*

Board Direction:

- *None*

C. Pacific Grove High School Career Technical Education (CTE) Update

Board Questions/Comments:

- *JP: Interested in figuring out what needs to be done for the students to obtain a certification at the end of the program.*
- *BS: Showed support of the program and its robustness.*

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- *CD: Said she felt it was great exposure for kids.*
- *FR: Kudos to the program. Requested presentation slides.*
- *CS: Is CTE a possibility for middle school? What should the board be asking to help expand the program?*

Public Comment:

- *Burr Guthrie: Congratulations on culinary award. Mentioned he felt the program is robust. Wanted to make the board aware of pending legislation that could mean more money for the program. When expansion of program happens, he would be interested in seeing programs that are more "outside-the-box".*

Board Direction:

- *None*

D. Future Agenda Items

- Added October 21, 2021: A Board member requested creating policy regarding virtual meetings, including site councils, parent/teacher conferences and other meetings
- Added November 18, 2021: A Board member requested a Board advocacy committee
- Added March 3, 2022: A Board member requested a special meeting to discuss Cultural Proficiency professional development (Fall 2022)
- Added March 3, 2022: Discuss elementary school reconfiguration as it relates to issues of equity
- Added March 17, 2022: Board Self Evaluation (June 16, 2022)
- Added April 21, 2022: Discuss "PG Promise" of funding CTE certification process
- Added May 19, 2022: Discuss Teacher of the Year Recognition

- Added June 2, 2022: Discuss CSBA Sample School Safety Resolution
- Added June 2, 2022: A Board member requested bringing in someone to do a presentation regarding low-income housing in Pacific Grove.

Board Questions/Comments:

- None

Public Comment:

- None

Board Direction:

- None

XIII. ADJOURNMENT Time: 11:03 PM

Next regular Board meeting: June 16, 2022

Approved and submitted:



Dr. Ralph Gómez Porrás
Secretary to the Board

MONTEREY COUNTY



OFFICE OF THE COUNTY COUNSEL

168 WEST ALISAL STREET, 3RD FLOOR, SALINAS, CALIFORNIA 93901-2439
(831) 755-5045 FAX: (831) 755-5283

LESLIE J. GIRARD
COUNTY COUNSEL

CONFIDENTIAL IMMEDIATE ATTENTION REQUIRED

May 9, 2022

Via Electronic & U.S. Mail

Pacific Grove Unified School District
Board of Trustees
Attention: Dr. Ralph Gomez Porras, Superintendent
435 Hillcrest Avenue
Pacific Grove, CA 93950
rporras@pgusd.org

Re: 2021-2022 Monterey County Civil Grand Jury Final Report – “Excellence in Action: Monterey County’s Educational Response to Covid-19”

Dear Board of Trustees:

On behalf of the 2021/22 Monterey County Civil Grand Jury, and pursuant to Penal Code section 933.05(f), I am enclosing for your review the Grand Jury’s Final Report entitled “Excellence in Action: Monterey County’s Educational Response to Covid-19”, which has been approved for publication.

This report constitutes a Final Report for purposes of Penal Code section 933. Pursuant to that section, you must submit comments on the report to the:

Honorable, Stephanie Hulsey
Judge of the Superior Court
c/o Office of the County Counsel
168 W. Alisal Street, 3rd FL
Salinas, CA 93901

within ninety (90) days following its transmittal. You are responsible for Finding Nos. F1, F5, F8-F13, and Recommendation Nos. R1-R2. With respect to each finding, the District shall indicate one of the following:

- 1) That the District agrees with the finding; or
- 2) That the District disagrees wholly or partially with the finding, in which case the District must specify the portion of the finding that is disputed and shall include in the response an explanation of the reasons for the disagreement.

With respect to each recommendation, the District must report one of the following actions:

- 1) That the recommendation has been implemented, with a summary regarding the implemented action;

Pacific Grove Unified School District

May 9, 2022

Re: Excellence in Action: Monterey County's Educational Response to Covid 19

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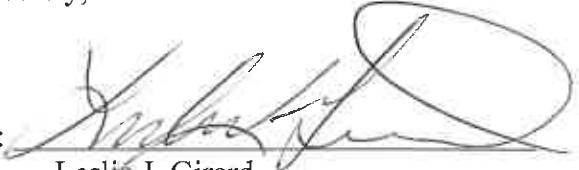
- 2) That the recommendation has not yet been implemented, but will be implemented in the future, with a timeframe for implementation; or
- 3) That the recommendation requires further analysis, with an explanation and the scope and parameters of an analysis or study, and a timeframe for the matter to be prepared for discussion by the District (this timeframe not to exceed six months from the date of publication).
- 4) The recommendations will not be implemented because it is not warranted or is not reasonable, with an explanation therefore.

Pursuant to Penal Code Section 933.05(f) the contents of this report may not be disclosed prior to its public release, which will occur no earlier than 48 hours following delivery.

Thank you for your attention to these matters; the Civil Grand Jury looks forward to your response.

Sincerely,

By:


Leslie J. Girard
County Counsel

LJG:so

Enclosure

cc: Grand Jury

Hon. Stephanie E. Hulsey, Judge of the Superior Court



PACIFIC GROVE UNIFIED SCHOOL DISTRICT

435 Hillcrest Avenue Pacific Grove, CA 93950

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May 24, 2022

The Honorable Stephanie Hulsey
Judge of the Superior Court
c/o Office of the County Counsel
168 W. Alisal Street, 3rd FL
Salinas, CA 93901

Re: **Response to the 2021-22 Monterey County Civil Grand Jury Final Report -
“Excellence in Action: Monterey County’s Educational Response to Covid-19”**

Dear Honorable Judge Hulsey:

The Pacific Grove Unified School District Board of Education has carefully reviewed and considered the Findings and Recommendations set forth in the 2021-22 Monterey County Civil Grand Jury Final Report entitled, *Excellence in Action: Monterey County’s Educational Response to Covid-19*. This letter shall serve as the official response of the Pacific Grove Unified School District to the Findings and Recommendations of the Monterey County Civil Grand Jury.

Sincerely,

Ralph Gómez Porras, Superintendent
Pacific Grove Unified School District

FINDINGS

F1 Educators and classified staff in Monterey County are to be commended for their initiative and flexibility in meeting the challenges of COVID-19. From the MCOE Superintendent to the newest part-time classroom aide, county educational employees went beyond their job descriptions in meeting the needs of students and their families during the pandemic.

- AGREE**
- PARTIALLY AGREE**
- DISAGREE**

F5 Administrators, teachers, and information technology staff in Monterey County are to be commended for making great strides in providing remote learning devices and solving internet access problems during the COVID-19 pandemic.

- AGREE**
- PARTIALLY AGREE**
- DISAGREE**

F8 Despite a lack of preparedness at many levels of government, MCOE, school districts, and staff responded to the impact of the pandemic in a timely manner.

- AGREE**
- PARTIALLY AGREE**
- DISAGREE**

F9 Monterey County successfully expanded internet connectivity due to the efforts of MCOE, industry partners, grant institutions, the Digital Task Force, and school district investment in technology.

- AGREE**
- PARTIALLY AGREE**
- DISAGREE**

F10 There is increased collaboration and coordination among agencies that provide services and support, including the MCOE, Monterey County Behavioral Health, the Monterey County Health Department, internet partners, school districts, support providers, and community groups.

- AGREE**
- PARTIALLY AGREE**
- DISAGREE**

F11 Administrators, teachers, parents, and students are all extremely concerned about students' social-emotional issues arising from COVID-19.

AGREE

PARTIALLY AGREE

DISAGREE

F12 Administrators, teachers, parents, and students are concerned about the learning loss that took place during the 2020-2021 school year. There is an urgent need for mitigation of such a loss.

AGREE

PARTIALLY AGREE

DISAGREE

F13 There is the potential for significant fiscal disruption with the continuing loss of ADA and the end of additional federal funding occurring at the same time.

AGREE

PARTIALLY AGREE

DISAGREE

RECOMMENDATIONS

R1 School districts maintain a minimum level of one behavioral support staff member at each school site until the end of the 2025-2026 school year.

HAS BEEN IMPLEMENTED

HAS NOT BEEN IMPLEMENTED BUT WILL BE IMPLEMENTED IN THE FUTURE

REQUIRES FURTHER ANALYSIS

WILL NOT BE IMPLEMENTED

Summary Response: All school sites have permanent counseling staff who may provide behavioral support as needed. Sites have additional personnel available during the school day to support student behavioral needs.

R2 School districts maintain learning loss mitigation programs and extended learning opportunities until the end of the 2025-2026 school year.

HAS BEEN IMPLEMENTED

HAS NOT BEEN IMPLEMENTED BUT WILL BE IMPLEMENTED IN THE FUTURE

REQUIRES FURTHER ANALYSIS

WILL NOT BE IMPLEMENTED

Response: All sites have provided, and will continue to provide, learning loss mitigation programs during the school day, integral to the instructional program. Additionally, all sites and all grade levels provide extended school year services designed for mitigating learning loss during the month of June following the close of the regular school year. After school extended learning opportunities are provided for all students.

EXCELLENCE IN ACTION: MONTEREY COUNTY'S EDUCATIONAL RESPONSE TO COVID-19

SUMMARY

The Monterey County Civil Grand Jury (MCCGJ) felt compelled to investigate Monterey County's educational response to Coronavirus Disease of 2019 (COVID-19) due to the persuasive concerns expressed by members of the public about the impacts of COVID-19 on students' mental health and students' academic learning loss. The eventual end of additional federal and state funding and the haste with which it must be used are also concerns.

The 2021/2022 MCCGJ conducted numerous interviews with staff members of the Monterey County Office of Education (MCOE) and other educators in Monterey County. Those interviews led to research into the many support services the MCOE provided to its 24 public school districts (135 schools) during the transition from in-person learning to distance learning in March 2020. School districts, teachers, and educational support personnel demonstrated initiative and flexibility in meeting the needs of students in the first years of the pandemic. The MCCGJ found that MCOE was proactive and instrumental in providing support and services to the school districts and other educational facilities in Monterey County.

MCOE played a leading role in the success of students and teachers by providing personal protective equipment (PPE) and professional development, ensuring technology was available to all, functioning as a central distribution center, increasing fiscal oversight of additional federal and state funding, creating a network to share information, and maintaining the operational capability of the MCOE during the pandemic.

GLOSSARY AND ACRONYMS

| | |
|-----|-----------------------------|
| ADA | Average Daily Attendance |
| CDC | Centers for Disease Control |

| | |
|----------|---|
| CDE | California Department of Education |
| COVID-19 | Coronavirus Disease of 2019 |
| ESSER | Elementary and Secondary School Emergency Relief fund |
| GEER | Governor's Emergency Education Relief fund |
| LCAP | Local Control Accountability Plan |
| LEA | Local Education Agency (usually a school district) |
| LLMF | Learning Loss Mitigation Fund |
| MCCGJ | Monterey County Civil Grand Jury |
| MCHD | Monterey County Health Department |
| MCOE | Monterey County Office of Education |
| OES | California Office of Emergency Services |
| PPE | Personal Protective Equipment |
| SEL | Social Emotional Learning |
| WhatsApp | Message application for group chats |

BACKGROUND

The MCOE was established more than 160 years ago by California's Constitution. All counties are required to provide educational resources to the citizens of their cities and towns. The mission of the MCOE is to "provide leadership, support, and service excellence needed to prepare the diverse students of Monterey County for success." With an annual budget of \$179 million, the MCOE provides a wide range of resources to support the 75,600 students and 11,000 school staff members in the county public schools.

The MCOE started planning in December of 2019 for COVID-19 and by January of 2020 was actively preparing for COVID-19's impacts.

Schools normally have in-person instruction, defined as, "instruction under the physical supervision and control of a certificated employee of the local educational agency (LEA)." With a national emergency declared on March 13, 2020, due to COVID-19, in-person instruction stopped. Given the uncertainty of the impact of the COVID-19

pandemic, in-person instruction was not immediately allowable under state and local health orders and the transition to various online distance learning platforms began. Some schools began instruction through distance learning or online in late March 2020. The 2020-2021 school year started online and continued until May 2021, when LEAs were given the option to return to in-person instruction.

METHODOLOGY

The MCCGJ employed four methods of research:

- We reviewed publicly available documents, including those from the California Department of Education (CDE), the MCOE, and County school districts
- We interviewed members of the Board of Supervisors, MCOE staff, and district superintendents
- We performed internet searches for documents and news articles about COVID-19 and education in Monterey County
- We obtained and studied documents from MCOE, received a briefing from the MCOE Superintendent, and then toured the MCOE



DISCUSSION

Buildings Closed, But Schools Remained Open

COVID-19 severely impacted education in Monterey County. It was not just the quantity of changes that occurred, but also the speed at which they happened. California Governor Gavin Newsom declared a state of emergency on March 4, 2020; Monterey County Board of Supervisors declared a state of emergency on March 10, 2020; President Trump declared a national state of emergency on March 13, 2020; and Monterey County schools closed on March 16, 2020, with a planned reopening on March 31, 2020. However, Governor Newsom said on March 17, 2020, that schools might be closed to in-person learning until the end of the school year. Schools remained closed to in-person learning the rest of that school year and much of the next school year, until May 2021, when LEAs had the option to return to in-person instruction.

When schools transitioned from in-person education to distance learning, the MCOE, LEAs, teachers, staff, parents, and students all faced major challenges. The unexpected closure of schools impacted the physical, emotional, social, and educational environments of students, which resulted in behavioral health issues and learning loss. The Centers for Disease Control (CDC) reported that trauma in early life, like prolonged social isolation, unpredictable routines, economic hardship, housing insecurity, and grief over missed significant life events, can continue to impact some students' long-term psychological and physiological well-being throughout their lifetimes. Mental health professionals have identified increases in anxiety, depression, PTSD symptoms, suicidal ideation (thinking about or planning to take your own life), and substance abuse. Between March and October of 2020, the number of mental-health related visits to the emergency room increased by 24% for ages 5-11 and by 31% for ages 12-17 over 2019 numbers. The impacts of the switch to distance learning in March 2020 and throughout the 2020-2021 school year will be felt for some time, particularly by students.

To assist in the mental health recovery from the pandemic, the Little Hoover Commission recommends that "schools become hubs of mental well-being" and "centers of wellness." Schools have eyes on children and can identify mental and

behavioral issues and then coordinate and integrate data, services, and funding among mental health support providers. Using funding from the Children and Youth Behavioral Health Initiative, included in the Governor’s May revision to the 2021-2022 budget, schools can increase the number of school counselors, school psychologists, and school social workers.

Response To The Transition

School districts, teachers, classified staff, educational support personnel, and the MCOE met these challenges with initiative and flexibility. Educators, at all levels, went beyond their job descriptions to provide support and services to students and their families. Schools were used as food distribution centers, and COVID-19 testing and vaccination clinics. Schools invested in behavioral health support systems. Schools created new professional development for teachers to learn how to change from in-person to distance learning in one to two weeks. Some bigger school districts even provided clothing and housing. School districts and their schools stepped up in a tough situation to provide holistic student support, which included food, healthcare, academics, and mental health services.

Teachers had to undertake extensive online training to learn new software, such as Google Classroom, Canvas, and Zoom. Some teachers had to learn how to use new electronic devices. Professional development also included learning new teaching techniques for online instruction and about social-emotional learning (SEL), so that teachers could identify signs of needed support. To further support their students, 5,000 teachers voluntarily signed up for extra SEL training, which was offered by MCOE.



While teachers worked from home, the classified staff worked from school, which exposed them to greater risk from COVID-19. Food service workers distributed hundreds of thousands of free meals to students, including home deliveries, when necessary. The daily free and reduced-cost lunch program continued during school closures. Bus drivers moved supplies and made deliveries of food and lessons to student homes. Buses served as wi-fi hot spots. Eighty percent of Monterey County's Early Childhood Education Centers remained open to provide services when schools were closed. Whether due to COVID-19, competition from industry, or the law of supply and demand, these services were provided despite school districts reporting shortages of teachers, substitutes, mental health workers, and bus drivers.

Monterey County Office Of Education Responds To The Pandemic

MCOE provided school districts with resources and support, mental health services, and increased collaboration among community agencies to provide support and services. Not all districts needed the same resources, and larger school districts with more infrastructure and resources required less support from MCOE and could provide more resources independently to students. MCOE maintained continuity of operation during these first two years of COVID-19 while undertaking new initiatives, and met the needs of districts, teachers, students, and families. It produced a catalog of services that they could provide to support school districts during the crisis. MCOE's website offered a variety of resources, including information on free school meals, distance learning supports, mental health supports, and much more.

MCOE served as a central distribution point for PPE and information. It became the regional hub for PPE and coordinated with the CDE and the Governor's Office of Emergency Services (OES) to secure PPE. They distributed over 714,000 masks, gloves, hand sanitizer, and other PPE to schools. Within three days of school closure, a WhatsApp communication system was set up among district superintendents. MCOE gathered information from the CDC, CDE, and the Monterey County Health Department (MCHD) and shared it in weekly meetings with superintendents and instructional leaders and daily with small school districts.

MCOE created professional development to address issues of technology, social-emotional learning, English language development, and others. They produced 650 webinars, provided thousands of hours of virtual coaching, and had open “tech” hours. With the demand for behavioral health specialists increasing amidst a shortage of providers, MCOE followed its 2020-2025 Strategic Plan and priorities. Strategic Priority Three is, “All schools will promote the physical and mental health of their students...” The specific priorities are 3D, “Leverage and align community resources to meet student needs and social and emotional wellness,” and 3F, “Strengthen communication and collaboration between educators and outside organizations working on physical and mental health.”



One of MCOE's biggest contributions to education during the pandemic was the creation of the Digital Equity Task Force. MCOE conducted a survey that showed in March 2020, 9,839 students did not have electronic devices and 11,291 students did not have internet access. That number was reduced by August 19, 2020, to 1,120 students without electronic devices and 1,082 with no internet. By the start of the 2020-2021 school year, both numbers were zero. This was accomplished by an extensive fundraising effort for technology, which raised \$2,659,960 from 26 donors with the goal of \$3,513,950. Federal funding made raising the rest of the funds a moot point. The first \$569,000 bought 1,300 devices. The six biggest donors were:

1. Monterey County \$1,000,000,

2. Bruce Taylor and Taylor Farms \$890,510,
3. Harden Foundation \$500,000,
4. Monterey Peninsula Foundation \$85,000,
5. Community Foundation for Monterey County \$30,000, and
6. Nancy Buck Ransom Foundation \$30,000.

Federal And State Funding

Substantial amounts of federal and state funding have been received by Monterey County schools to “prevent, prepare for, and respond” to the COVID-19 pandemic. Sixteen categories of allowable uses for any COVID-19 funding were identified by the federal government. The Coronavirus Act, Relief, and Economic Security Act, which includes the Elementary and Secondary Schools Emergency Relief (ESSER I) fund and the Governor’s Emergency Education Relief (GEER I) fund all passed on March 27, 2020, and the funds must be spent by Sept. 30, 2022. California received \$1.6 billion in ESSER I and \$355 million in GEER 1. Most of the GEER 1 funds went to special education. Monterey County schools received \$13,519,507 from these acts. There was also a federal learning loss mitigation fund (LLMF) of \$5 billion to support pupil academic achievement and mitigate learning loss related to COVID-19 school closures.

The Coronavirus Response and Relief Supplemental Appropriations Act, including ESSER II and GEER II, was passed on Dec. 27, 2020, and the funds must be spent by Sept. 30, 2023. California received \$6.7 billion in ESSER II and \$341 million in GEER II. Monterey County schools received \$62,595,419. Sixteen categories of allowable uses for any COVID-19 funding were identified by the federal government.

The American Rescue Plan Act of 2021, which included funding for ESSER III was passed on March 11, 2021; the funds must be spent by the end of the 2024/2025 school year. California received an additional \$98.7 million for homeless students, but most of California’s funding was for grants from the LLMF established by the State.

California received \$15 billion in ESSER III funding, and Monterey County received \$140,681,284.

At least twenty percent of a district's allocation of the GEER and ESSER funds must be reserved to address the academic impact of lost instructional time through implementation of evidence-based interventions. Allowable uses include summer learning, an extended school day, after-school programs, extended school year programs, mental health services and supports, and adoption or integration of SEL into the core curriculum and the school day. There is persuasive anecdotal evidence that learning loss took place, but no quantitative data because statewide California Assessment of Student Performance and Progress tests did not take place in 2020 or 2021.

Some school districts spent their funds on PPE, adding additional custodial staff, hiring learning acceleration specialists, securing mental health support staff, adding classroom aides, hiring more teachers to prevent mixed-grade classes, and creating extended learning opportunities. Some schools upgraded their heating and ventilation systems, installed contact-less water fountains, faucets, hand sanitizer dispensers, paper towel dispensers, and completed other physical plant improvements.

Monitoring all this spending has been MCOE. The MCOE has statutory oversight of school district budgets under Assembly Bill 1200, passed by the legislature in 1991. The MCOE Superintendent's major statutory responsibility is to provide fiscal oversight, and this encompasses reviewing and approving the financial status of district budgets, Local Control Accountability Plans (LCAP) and certifying reports. MCOE has made fiscal stability a strategic priority.

In its 2020-2025 Strategic Plan, Strategic Priority 5 states, "MCOE policies and systems will proactively and creatively align resources to support dynamic teaching and learning while remaining fiscally solvent." Priority 5A states that MCOE will "monitor financial information and provide direction to assist MCOE and all LEAs in maintaining fiscal stability." MCOE accomplishes this by monitoring the quarterly reports that go to the federal government, reviewing and approving Federal LCAPs that include the

federal funding which goes to the CDE before arriving at the federal government and holding regular discussions about allowable expenses.

Accountability is achieved with the use of State templates, accountability checklists, additional documentation to the federal government, and MCOE's constant oversight. MCOE provides an official review letter with each submission of an adopted budget, 1st interim budget, 2nd interim budget, and end-of-the-year unaudited actuals. An official review letter from the MCOE Business Services Department accompanies the return of a school district's financial report and provides guidance and identifies areas of concern. In addition, there is a yearly audit by an independent agency. Transparency is maintained through public stakeholder meetings on LCAP and its passage at an open board meeting. Audits and budgets are public documents and are accepted and approved in open board meetings.

Concern has been expressed about two financial issues: the end of the federal funding and the drop in Average Daily Attendance (ADA). Although attempts are being made to extend the deadline to the end of 2024-2025 school year for the expenditure of COVID-19 funding, that is not a certainty. MCOE has made it clear to districts that those temporary revenues should not be used for permanent expenses. However, after four years of extra funding, it will come to a stop at the same time as school districts are experiencing a drop in ADA. County-wide ADA has dropped 10% over last year, with some districts dropping as low as 5% or as high as 18%. Since ADA generates most of the revenue for school districts, the matter is of concern. The combination of the end of the federal emergency funding with the drop in ADA while students still need behavioral intervention services and learning loss mitigation is problematic.

MCOE Leadership

In December of 2019, MCOE started planning for the pandemic, and by late January or early February of 2020 it was actively preparing for it. The Monterey County Superintendent of Schools provided critical proactive educational leadership in the early days of the pandemic. By establishing the WhatsApp network within three days of school closure, the superintendent provided essential information from the CDC, the CDE, and the MCHD. The information was shared on a weekly basis with district

superintendents. Superintendents could now collaborate on shared issues and best practices with confidentiality.

The superintendent initiated a survey to identify needed technology and then created a Digital Equity Task Force on April 9, 2020, with over 40 representatives from education, industry, and information technology to meet those needs, primarily lack of technology and access to the internet across the County. The superintendent immediately started fundraising with a goal of \$3.5 million to provide almost 10,000 students with devices. The fundraising team raised \$2.6 million before federal funding arrived.

Under the superintendent's leadership, MCOE maintained continuity of operation while taking on additional tasks of increased financial monitoring, becoming a distribution hub, creating new professional development for teachers and staff, fundraising for technology, and serving as a communication center.

FINDINGS

- F1** Educators and classified staff in Monterey County are to be commended for their initiative and flexibility in meeting the challenges of COVID-19. From the MCOE Superintendent to the newest part-time classroom aide, county educational employees went beyond their job descriptions in meeting the needs of students and their families during the pandemic.
- F2** The Monterey County Superintendent of Schools is to be commended for proactive leadership in a time of crisis. Without such leadership, Monterey County's educational response to COVID-19 would have been inadequate.
- F3** MCOE is to be commended for maintaining continuity of operations while increasing support services for school districts under the most challenging of circumstances.
- F4** All the donors who contributed to the Digital Equity Fund are to be commended for their generosity.
- F5** Administrators, teachers, and information technology staff in Monterey County are to be commended for making great strides in providing remote learning devices and solving internet access problems during the COVID-19 pandemic.
- F6** MCOE is working with all school districts to assure fiscal accountability and stewardship of the public's education dollars.

- F7** MCOE's service departments continue working diligently to provide support, guidance, training, and resources for all members of Monterey County's educational community.
- F8** Despite a lack of preparedness at many levels of government, MCOE, school districts, and staff responded to the impact of the pandemic in a timely manner.
- F9** Monterey County successfully expanded internet connectivity due to the efforts of MCOE, industry partners, grant institutions, the Digital Task Force, and school district investment in technology.
- F10** There is increased collaboration and coordination among agencies that provide services and support, including the MCOE, Monterey County Behavioral Health, the Monterey County Health Department, internet partners, school districts, support providers, and community groups.
- F11** Administrators, teachers, parents, and students are all extremely concerned about students' social-emotional issues arising from COVID-19.
- F12** Administrators, teachers, parents, and students are concerned about the learning loss that took place during the 2020-2021 school year. There is an urgent need for mitigation of such a loss.
- F13** There is the potential for significant fiscal disruption with the continuing loss of ADA and the end of additional federal funding occurring at the same time.

RECOMMENDATIONS

- R1** School districts maintain a minimum level of one behavioral support staff member at each school site until the end of the 2025-2026 school year.
- R2** School districts maintain learning loss mitigation programs and extended learning opportunities until the end of the 2025-2026 school year.
- R3** MCOE should continue to closely monitor district LCAPs and budgets for the impacts of ADA loss and the end of emergency federal funding.
- R4** MCOE be forward thinking about its emergency plans.
- R5** MCOE should establish partnerships and internships with CSU Monterey Bay, MCBH, and industry partners to increase the number of mental health workers, teachers, substitutes, and bus drivers

REQUIRED RESPONSES

The following responses are required pursuant to Penal Code sections 933 and 933.05:

From the following governing bodies within 90 days:

- Monterey County Board of Education
Findings: F1, F3-F13
Recommendations: R1-R5

- County school district boards of trustees:
Findings: F1, F5, F8-F13
Recommendations: R1-R2
 - Alisal Union School District
 - Big Sur Unified School District
 - Bradley Union School District
 - Carmel Unified School District
 - Chualar Union School District
 - Gonzales Unified School District
 - Graves School District
 - Greenfield Union School District
 - King City Union School District
 - Lagunita School District
 - Mission Union School District
 - Monterey Peninsula Unified School District
 - North Monterey County Unified School District
 - Pacific Grove Unified School District
 - Salinas City Elementary School District
 - Salinas Union High School District
 - San Antonio Union School District
 - San Ardo Union School District
 - San Lucas Union School District
 - Santa Rita Union School District
 - Soledad Unified School District
 - South Monterey County Joint Union High School District
 - Spreckels Union School District
 - Washington Union School District

INVITED RESPONSES

- Monterey County Superintendent of Schools
Findings: F1-F2, F4

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