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Board of Trustees
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Guadalupe Guzmán
Fernando Mercado

Dr. Héctor Rico, Superintendent

August 31, 2017

Via Hand Delivery
Monterey County Superior Court
Attention: Honorable Mark E. Hood
Presiding Judge of the Superior Court
County of Monterey
240 Church Street
Salinas, CA 93901

Dear Judge Hood,

Enclosed, please find the Alisal Union School District Board of Trustees' response to the 2016-2017 Monterey County Civil Grand Jury Final Report — "The Impact of Second Language Learners from Low Income Families on Elementary School Education in Salinas." This response was approved by the Alisal Union School District Board of Trustees during their regular board meeting on August 30, 2017.

Cordially,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Hector Rico".

Héctor Rico, Ed.D.
Superintendent



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Dr. Héctor Rico, Superintendent

Date: August 21, 2017

To: The Honorable Mark E. Hood
Presiding Judge of the Superior Court
County of Monterey
240 Church Street
Salinas, CA 93901

From: Héctor Rico, Ed.D.
Superintendent
and
Guadalupe Guzmán
Board of Trustees, President
Alisal Union School District
1205 E. Market St.,
Salinas, CA 93905

Re: **Response to the 2016-17 Monterey County Civil Grand Jury Final Report
- "The Impact of Second Language Learners from Low Income Families on
Elementary School Education in Salinas"**

The 2016-17 Civil Grand Jury Final Report - "The Impact of Second Language Learners from Low Income Families on Elementary School Education in Salinas" - focuses on the need for English Learners to attain proficiency which is a top priority for Monterey County.

Findings and Recommendations:

F2. The Alisal Union School District in Salinas is not meeting statewide averages for English and math test scores.

The Alisal Union School District Superintendent and the Alisal Union School District Board of Education agree with this finding.

F3. The K-3 class sizes exceed the 20 students per teacher that was mandated by the California Department of Education in 1996.

While the Alisal Union School District Superintendent and the Alisal Union School District Board of Education agree with this statement that Alisal USD K-3 class sizes exceed the 20 students per

teacher that was mandated by CDE in 1996, it is worthy to note that this Twenty-to-One mandate has been revised.

The K–3 Class Size Reduction (CSR) Program (Senate Bill 1777, Chapter 163, Statutes of 1996) was established in 1996 for kindergarten through third grade. This program provided funds to school districts and charter schools that reduced class size to 20 pupils or fewer per certificated teacher. The program *ended* at the conclusion of the 2012-13 school year.

Currently California Education Code (EC) sections 41376 and 41378:

(a) demand an “Average” class size—meaning that while some individual classes may exceed the student-to-teacher ratio, the District can still meet compliance *if* the overall average ratio of all classes within a particular grade level is within the legally proscribed range; and

(b) prescribe the maximum class sizes and penalties for districts with any classes that exceed the following limits:

Kindergarten – average class size not to exceed 31 students; no class larger than 33 students
Grades one through three – average class size not to exceed 30 students; no class larger than 32 students
Grades four through eight – in the current fiscal year, average number of students per teacher not to exceed the greater of 29.9 or the district’s average number of students per teacher from the base year of 1964

F4. The general goals for the progress of ELL students set by the California Department of Education for teaching ELL students are not specific or quantifiable, and do not provide a standard against which actual results could be compared.

The Alisal Union School District Superintendent and the Alisal Union School District Board of Education partially agree with this finding.

The California Department of Education (CDE) goals for the progress of English Learner students are not specific or quantifiable. Research indicates it takes between five to seven years for a child to acquire the academic language that is needed to be on a level with native speakers. (Hakuta, K., Goto Butler, Y. & Witt, D. (2000), *How Long Does It Take English Learners to Attain Proficiency?*, Stanford, CA: The University of California Linguistic Minority Research Institute). English Learners enter school at different stages of English language development and with varied linguistic and experiential backgrounds. A student’s background knowledge and level of proficiency in their primary language affects the pace at which a student will attain English proficiency.

The California Department of Education’s *English Language Arts, English Language Development Framework* (2014) provides a standard for the progress of all English Learners which specifically defines the stages of progress of English language development. English Learners take the

California English Language Development Test (CELDT) annually in order to measure their progress. This test assesses four language domains: reading, writing, listening, and speaking. In addition, the CELDT measures five levels of proficiency: beginning, early intermediate, early advanced, and advanced. The CELDT Performance Descriptors define the specific English proficiencies at each level. (*Appendix 1*). The CDE expects that, “English learners acquire full proficiency in English as rapidly and effectively as possible and attain parity with native speakers of English,” and, “within a reasonable period, achieve the same rigorous grade level academic standards that are expected of all students.”

The test components of CELDT domains are listed in the chart below:

| Domain | Test Component K-1 | Test Component Grades 2-12 |
|------------------|--|---|
| Listening | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Following Oral Directions ■ Teacher Talk ■ Extended Listening Comprehension ■ Rhyming | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Following Oral Directions ■ Teacher Talk ■ Extended Listening Comprehension ■ Rhyming (Grade 2 only) |
| Speaking | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Oral Vocabulary ■ Speech Functions ■ Choose and Give Reasons ■ 4-Picture Narrative | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Oral Vocabulary ■ Speech Functions ■ Choose and Give Reasons ■ 4-Picture Narrative |
| Reading | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Word Analysis ■ Fluency and Vocabulary ■ Reading Comprehension | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Word Analysis ■ Fluency and Vocabulary ■ Reading Comprehension |
| Writing | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Copying Letters and Words ■ Writing Words ■ Punctuation and Capitalization | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Grammar and Structure ■ Writing Sentences ■ Writing Short Composition |

Additionally, the CDE requires that each district’s Local Control and Accountability Plan must include baseline data and defined goals for English Learner progress toward English proficiency as measured by CELDT progress and Reclassification data.

Further, the CDE's new Local Control Funding Formula (LCFF) has an evaluation rubric that includes the expectation that English learners will move up at least one CELDT level until they are reclassified (*see Appendix 2*).

F5. It is unlikely that the low amount of funding per student ADA, the disparity between the cost of living in Salinas, and starting teachers' salaries will be solved in the foreseeable future.

The Alisal Union School District Superintendent and the Alisal Union School District Board of Education agree with this finding.

The amount of state funds per student ADA is the same regardless of where your district is located (except for basic aid districts). Therefore, in a high cost area, the funding is the same as in a low-cost area.

F6. The new CSUMB/Hartnell College joint venture, the "Professional Teacher Pathway," in South Monterey County provides a blueprint for similar programs and would contribute to a long-term solution to the shortage of qualified teachers in the Salinas elementary schools.

The Alisal Union School District Superintendent and the Alisal Union School District Board of Education agree with this finding.

The new CSUMB/Hartnell College joint venture to create a professional teacher pathway could indeed help the greater Salinas area grow local talent and produce teachers who are from the community and want to teach in or near their home towns in the future.

F7. Cooperation and coordination between the elementary school districts and the Salinas middle schools within the Salinas Union High School District is not adequate to ensure that all students entering middle schools are equally prepared.

The Alisal Union School District Superintendent and the Alisal Union School District Board of Education partially agree with this finding.

The (TK-6th) Alisal Union School District is one of seven feeder districts that enter the Salinas Union High School District. Coordination among the districts' academic programs is important. While each district is responsible for its own curriculum which is approved by its local school board, matriculation from the elementary districts to the high school district ensures continuity in the students' educational preparation.

Currently, Alisal Union School District has been working collaboratively to articulate its programs with corresponding secondary school districts, and has plans to deepen the coordination of its programs to ensure that all students entering middle schools are equally prepared.

R1. The Salinas elementary school districts should adopt specific goals for the number of years it should take for ELL students to achieve proficiency.

The Alisal Union School District Superintendent has instructed his staff to begin drafting appropriate goals and objectives detailing the *number of instructional years* it should take for an EL to achieve English fluency. The recommendation of these specific EL-to-RFEP goals and objectives—which will be coded in the District Local Control Accountability Plan for 2018-2021—will be brought to Board for consideration and adoption when completed but no later than June 30, 2018.

R2. The three Salinas school districts should establish and use a uniform ELL curriculum to ensure that all students are equally prepared when entering middle school.

It is not within the legal and operational authority of the Alisal Union School District Superintendent and the Alisal Union School District Board of Education to compel the other two elementary school districts in Salinas to adopt a uniform EL curriculum. However, Alisal Union School District will continue its collaborative efforts to align its EL programs' goals with its neighboring elementary school districts to ensure that all EL students are equally prepared to enter middle school.

The Alisal Union School District Superintendent and the Alisal Union School District Board of Education thank you for the opportunity to review and comment on the findings and recommendations of the 2016-2017 Monterey County Civil Grand Jury Final Report – “The Impact of Second Language Learners from Low Income Families on Elementary School Education in Salinas.”

Appendix 1

Overall Test Performance Descriptors

Kindergarten and Grade One

Advanced

Students at this level of English language performance communicate effectively with various audiences on a wide range of familiar and new topics to meet social and learning demands. In order to attain the English proficiency level of their native English-speaking peers, further linguistic enhancement and refinement are still necessary. They are able to orally identify and summarize concrete details and abstract concepts during unmodified instruction in all academic domains. Written production reflects grade-appropriate discourse. Errors are infrequent and do not reduce communication.

Early Advanced

Students at this level of English language performance begin to combine the elements of the English language in complex, cognitively demanding situations and are able to use English as a means for learning in academic domains. They are able to identify and summarize most concrete details and abstract concepts during unmodified instruction in most academic domains. Oral production is characterized by more elaborate discourse, and written production includes simple sentences often using two-syllable words. Errors are less frequent and rarely complicate communication.

Intermediate

Students at this level of English language performance begin to tailor the English language skills to meet communication and learning demands with increasing accuracy. They are able to identify and understand more concrete details and some abstract concepts during unmodified instruction. They are able to respond and express themselves orally with increasing ease to more varied communication and learning demands with a reduced number of errors. Written production has usually expanded to common phrases and one-syllable words. Errors still complicate communication.

Early Intermediate

Students at this level of English language performance continue to develop receptive and productive English skills. They are able to identify and understand more concrete details during unmodified instruction. They may be able to respond with increasing ease to more varied communication and learning demands with a reduced number of errors. Oral production is usually limited to phrases and memorized statements and questions. Written production is limited to letters and high-frequency, one-syllable words. Frequent errors still reduce communication.

Beginning

Students at this level of English language performance may demonstrate little or no receptive or productive English skills. They are beginning to understand a few concrete details during unmodified instruction. They may be able to respond to some communication and learning demands, but with many errors. Oral production is usually limited to disconnected words and memorized statements and questions. Written production is incomprehensible or limited to common letters. Frequent errors make communication difficult.

Grades Two Through Twelve

Advanced

Students at this level of English language performance communicate effectively with various audiences on a wide range of familiar and new topics to meet social and learning demands. In order to attain the English proficiency level of their native English-speaking peers, further linguistic enhancement and refinement are still necessary. They are able to identify and summarize concrete details and abstract concepts during unmodified instruction in all academic domains. Oral and written productions reflect discourse appropriate for academic domains. Errors are infrequent and do not reduce communication.

Early Advanced

Students at this level of English language performance begin to combine the elements of the English language in complex, cognitively demanding situations and are able to use English as a means for learning in academic domains. They are able to identify and summarize most concrete details and abstract concepts during unmodified instruction in most academic domains. Oral and written productions are characterized by more elaborate discourse and fully developed paragraphs and compositions. Errors are less frequent and rarely complicate communication.

Intermediate

Students at this level of English language performance begin to tailor the English language skills to meet communication and learning demands with increasing accuracy. They are able to identify and understand more concrete details and some major abstract concepts during unmodified instruction. They are able to respond with increasing ease to more varied communication and learning demands with a reduced number of errors. Oral and written productions have usually expanded to sentences, paragraphs, and original statements and questions. Errors still complicate communication.

Early Intermediate

Students at this level of English language performance continue to develop receptive and productive English skills. They are able to identify and understand more concrete details during unmodified instruction. They may be able to respond with increasing ease to more varied communication and learning demands with a reduced number of errors. Oral and written productions are usually limited to phrases and memorized statements and questions. Frequent errors still reduce communication.

Beginning

Students at this level of English language performance may demonstrate little or no receptive or productive English skills. They are beginning to understand a few concrete details during unmodified instruction. They may be able to respond to some communication and learning demands, but with many errors. Oral and written production is usually limited to disconnected words and memorized statements and questions. Frequent errors make communication difficult.

Appendix 2

California School Dashboard and LCFF Evaluation Rubrics Indicators

| State Indicator | Status | Change | Applies to |
|--|--|---|---|
| Graduation Rate | Four-year cohort graduation rate | Status compared with average four-year cohort graduation rate for three years prior to the status year | Districts, charters, and schools for grades 9-12 |
| Suspension Rate | Number of pupils suspended at least once in school year divided by number of enrolled students | Status compared with pupils suspended at least once in school year divided by number of enrolled students in year prior to the status year | Districts, charters, and schools for grades TK-12 |
| English Learner Progress | Percent of English learners (ELs) who moved up at least one CELDT (soon to be ELPAC) level or were reclassified | Status compared with percent of ELs who moved up at least one CELDT level or who were reclassified each of the past three years or in the year prior to the status year | Districts, charters, and schools for grades TK-12 |
| Academic: English Language Arts | Proficiency rate on English Language Arts Smarter Balanced Assessment for grades 3-8 | Status compared with proficiency rate on English Language Arts Smarter Balanced Assessment for grades 3-8 in year prior to the status year | Districts, charters, and schools for grades TK-8 |
| Academic: Mathematics | Proficiency rate on Mathematics Smarter Balanced Assessment for grades 3-8 | Status compared with proficiency rate on Mathematics Smarter Balanced Assessment for grades 3-8 in year prior to the status year | Districts, charters, and schools for grades TK-8 |
| Chronic Absenteeism | <i>There will be no performance provided for this state performance indicator in 2017.</i> | | Districts, charters, and schools for grades TK-12 |
| College and Career Readiness | <i>This will be a local indicator for 2016-17, but will transition to a state indicator in 2017-18. It is expected to include "a-g" course completion, AP pass rate, and CAASPP test results for grade 11.</i> | | Districts, charters, and schools for grades TK-12 |