

Honoring Commitments to the Public

Review of 2016–17 Grand Jury Report Responses

Summary

The 2019-20 Santa Cruz County Grand Jury investigated whether respondents to 2016-17 Grand Jury reports honored their commitments. The respondents either affirm analysis of report recommendations within six months or implementation of recommendations within a specified time in the future. We found that generally, organizations fulfilled the commitments they made to the public. Each section of this report will describe the methodology the Grand Jury used to confirm commitment, follow-through, and the findings and recommendations for future action.

The value of the Grand Jury investigation and report process comes from the actions taken and sustained.

We note that all organizations are required to create a formal record of the actions they took, and continue to take, to address Grand Jury recommendations, and to share those records with the public.

Background

Each year the Grand Jury investigates local government organizations, makes findings, and then recommends how those organizations can serve the community more effectively and efficiently. The law requires the investigated organizations to respond to the findings and recommendations in writing. The investigated organizations receive a response packet that includes the instructions as shown in [Appendix A](#).

All reports were responded to in the required time frame in 2017. Readers interested in a more comprehensive look at the Grand Jury report and responses are encouraged to read the original 2017 report and the original responses from 2017. All may be found in the County's Grand Jury 2016-17 reports archive.^[1]

This report seeks to hold the government respondents accountable to the public and to their documented commitments by researching the follow up actions and providing a view of the impact those actions have had on the effectiveness of the government. The commitments made in 2017 have now had sufficient time to bear fruit. Thus, we report them now.

Note: Any interview requests and further document requests were put on hold by the Grand Jury in Spring of 2020 due to the COVID-19 virus pandemic. Our report presented here was developed prior to this time. Government agencies' and officials' very valuable time and resources are clearly needed to deal with this public health crisis.

Scope and Methodology

The Grand Jury requested documents to determine whether respondents took the actions indicated in their replies to the 2016-17 Grand Jury report recommendations. Table 1 summarizes the original 2017 report responses by investigative report and category of response – either to undertake “further analysis within six months” or to implement the recommendation at a specified time “in the future.” The table does not include “Has been implemented” or “Will not be implemented” responses.

Note again that the “Jails in Santa Cruz County” report was not included in the scope of this report. The Grand Jury is required by the Penal Code to inspect all jails facilities annually, and this oversight continues consistently from year to year. The Grand Jury notes that regarding the recommendation for drug scanners to be analyzed and implemented, the Sheriff’s Department installed a scanner in the main jail in 2019. This action is commendable.

Specifics of each investigation will be covered in separate sections of this report, along with details on methodology, and recommendations for further follow-up to ensure that commitments and actions persist over time.

Table 1: Summary of Responses to 2016-17 Investigative Report Recommendations which the 2019-20 Grand Jury Reinvestigated

2016-17 Grand Jury Report Title (link is to report section)	Respondent	Response: “Requires Further Analysis” within 6 Months	Response: Recommendation “Will Be Implemented in the Future”
<u>Every Vote Counts - A Look at Our County Elections Department</u> ^{[2] [3] [4]}	Santa Cruz County Board of Supervisors	—	R3
	Santa Cruz County Clerk	—	R1, R2
Soquel Union Elementary School District and the Brown Act ^[5]	Was not examined in this report.		
<u>Assessing the Threat of Violence in our Public Schools</u> ^{[6] [7] [8] [9] [10] [11] [12]}	Santa Cruz County Superintendent of Schools	R4	R1, R2, R3, R7
	Santa Cruz County Sheriff	—	R2, R3, R5
	City of Capitola Police Chief	—	R5, R8
	City of Santa Cruz Police Chief	—	—
	City of Scotts Valley Police Chief	—	R8
	City of Watsonville Police Chief	—	—
<u>Pajaro Valley Unified School District Bond Measure L</u> ^{[13] [14]}	PVUSD Board	R8	—
<u>Sharper Solutions - A Sticky Situation That Won't Go Away</u> ^{[15] [16] [17]}	Santa Cruz County Board of Supervisors	R4, R6, R7, R8, R9	—
	Santa Cruz County Health Services Agency Director	R6, R7, R8, R9	R1, R2
Jails in Santa Cruz County ^[18]	Was not examined in this report.		
<u>Santa Cruz Metropolitan Transit District - The Bus Stops Here</u> ^{[19] [20] [21]}	Santa Cruz Metropolitan Transit District Board	—	—
	Santa Cruz Metropolitan Transit District CEO	R9, R10, R11, R12	R14

Investigation

This Investigation section is a composite of five separate report follow-ups. Each section below, denoted by its respective report title, contains the recommendations made in the 2016-17 reports, and the responses to those recommendations. The 2019-20 updates are then provided from each of the respondents as to whether they did take those actions as pledged.

Report Title: *Every Vote Counts: A Look at Our County Elections Department*

The 2016-17 Grand Jury conducted a thorough examination of our County elections procedures. The inquiry ran the gamut from intensive training of staff and volunteers; election preparation; equipment programming, security, and testing; voter registration (including military, overseas, increasingly popular vote-by-mail, and early voting); logistics and mobilization for election day; and the complexities of vote tabulation and reporting. Important post-election activities such as provisional ballots review, random precinct audits, and touchscreen vote audits that further ensure the integrity of the election results were explored. The Grand Jury enjoyed the full cooperation of the County Elections Department throughout the extensive investigation, and commended the Department's diligence, dedication, and impressive professionalism. The Grand Jury also commended the Election Department's website, votescount.com,^[22] a comprehensive and valuable public resource.

The report concluded with seven findings and made three recommendations that required responses from the County Clerk and the County Board of Supervisors.

For purposes of the current report, the Grand Jury requested that both Respondents demonstrate that the promised actions have now been fully implemented—a particularly timely request in this 2020 election year.

Recommendations made to the Santa Cruz County Clerk:

- R1.** *Continue to be proactive in evaluating voting systems that are safe, efficient, and available.*

The County Clerk responded to R1 with a pledge of future implementation:

As new systems become available, we will participate in evaluating them. After 2018 and the implementation of the Vote Center model in a few counties in California, Santa Cruz will need to determine if we want to pursue a Vote Center model or the current polling place model. The type of voting model will impact our voting system needs. We anticipate putting together a voter advisory group in 2018 to assist us as we evaluate our options.

- R2.** *Once USB drives or other equipment have been connected to the County network, do not reattach to the offline vote counting systems.*

The County Clerk's response affirmed that this recommendation already was implemented for future use:

We have purchased additional USB drives and now have procedures in place to use a USB drive only once when taking data from our vote counting system and loading it onto the county network.

Recommendation made to the Santa Cruz County Board of Supervisors:

- R3.** *Identify and budget requisite funds for replacement of outdated election equipment once it has been certified (state certified, federally qualified).*

The Board of Supervisors responded to **R3** with a pledge of future implementation, adding "The Board understands the need for election equipment upgrades."

2020 Status Update: Were commitments fulfilled?

In October 2019, the County Clerk's Office visited the Grand Jury to explain the new voting system operation and discuss various aspects of the election cycle - a presentation similar to several offered to the public at large to acquaint them with the new system.

More recently, answering the Grand Jury's request for a 2020 status update, Respondents provided the following additional information on improvements to Santa Cruz County election equipment and procedures:

- Two federally qualified and state certified systems were offered to the County by the California Secretary of State. [\[23\]](#) [\[24\]](#)
- A Decision Group was formed, consisting of members from County Counsel, General Services, and Voter Accessibility Advisory Committee. [\[25\]](#)
- Formation of the Voter Advisory Group (originally planned for 2018) was delayed; the Elections Department plans to assemble the promised Citizen Advisory Group in 2021. [\[26\]](#)
- Of the two systems approved by the Secretary of State, Dominion Voting Systems was chosen, based largely on the long-established relationship of trust with the vendor. [\[27\]](#)
- A Staff Memo written by the County Clerk, and with approval recommended by County Administrative Officer, was presented to the Board of Supervisors at a regular public meeting on June 25, 2019. [\[28\]](#)
- June 25, 2019 Minutes indicate that the Board of Supervisors unanimously approved the voting system lease agreement. [\[29\]](#) [\[30\]](#)
- Deciding to opt out of the Vote Center model, the Elections Department instead developed a hybrid model of traditional polling sites plus ten Voter Service centers - the hybrid system functioned smoothly and efficiently in the March primary election. [\[31\]](#)
- Some modifications and refinements to this hybrid model are anticipated to further improve efficiency and accessibility for voters. [\[32\]](#)

In its update, the County Administrative Office (responding on behalf of the Board of Supervisors) simply confirmed that “New election equipment has been certified, leased, and deployed for use during the March 2020 Presidential Primary Election”,^[33] providing a link to the Elections Department website “votescount.com” for more information.^[34]

In conclusion, we find that three recommendations were made, and three responsive commitments were fulfilled. Based on the Decision Group evaluation of voting system options, the memo and presentation by the County Clerk, and the County Administrator’s recommendation, the Board of Supervisors approved the new contract and service agreement for the new voting system. The County Clerk completed all actions promised by immediately correcting a USB drive security vulnerability, and by evaluating available voting systems and efficiently transitioning to the updated system, successfully implementing its use in the Countywide primary election of March 2020.

Report Title: Assessing the Threat of Violence in our Public Schools

The 2016-17 Santa Cruz County Grand Jury investigated the readiness of our 10 public school districts, the County’s alternative education sites, and their respective law enforcement agencies to respond effectively to threats of targeted school violence. State law requires all public school districts and county offices of education to develop a comprehensive school safety plan.

2020 Status Update: Were Commitments Fulfilled?

The Grand Jury reports and responses of 2016-2017 has been the primary source of information used to examine whether or not the respective agencies fulfilled their commitments to implement recommended actions.^[35] In addition, a Santa Cruz County Grand Jury report was issued in 2018^[36] to review and confirm the first step: the development and documentation of a comprehensive Countywide threat plan ('The Plan').^[37] In that report, additional information about the Plan and the training was provided by the County Office of Education (COE). The 2018 investigation only looked at the COE and the Santa Cruz County Sheriff's Office (CSO)'s compliance with their responses and the development of the threat assessment plan. It did not analyze or evaluate the agencies' plans or preparations for physically securing school sites in a threat situation. This report takes that step.

We reviewed the Offices of Education websites for publicly available information and documentation, and requested documentation from the boards and law enforcement agencies to confirm actions taken as outlined in the plans. Training materials were reviewed as well as training roster attendance. As one benchmark with which to compare, the similar report made by the San Diego County Grand Jury was reviewed for best practices and opportunities to further improve.

In reviewing the 2019 report of the San Diego County Grand Jury "School Safety in San Diego County - How Prepared Are We for Another Active School Shooting?"^[38] we extract these key references and observations:

- The Naval Postgraduate School's Center for Homeland Defense and Security created a K-12 school shooting in America database^[39] that showed 2018 had the greatest number of incidents since 1970, and that California was one of the top three states for school shootings.^[40]
- School safety is a highly complex issue to which there is no universal, inexpensive or foolproof solution. Protecting children, teachers and staff members involves considering and planning for several dozen possible crisis scenarios...although the probability is low for a school shooting to occur, it is imperative that our schools be reasonably prepared for the possibility of such an event.
- All San Diego County schools in the Grand Jury study claimed to have conducted or have scheduled drills within the current school year on emergency procedures directed towards intruders on campus, but not specifically armed assailants.

These are very consistent with the reports of the Santa Cruz County Grand Jury. The Naval Postgraduate School site includes access to their newsletter with periodic updates on new incidents, analysis of trends, historical case studies, and other findings.

In the review of County of Santa Cruz and City of Santa Cruz education department websites, an example of a very robust action plan and implementation was seen from the City of Santa Cruz school safety plan,^[41] going well beyond the initial, albeit well done, Countywide plan.^[42] Annual retraining and other actions are not publicly posted by the County, as is called for in the City of Santa Cruz plan.

In June 2018 the Grand Jury published a follow-up report on the Countywide plan.^[43] Their recommendation was:

The COE and CSO should continue to work together to ensure that our schools and law enforcement agencies have up-to-date resources and training in threat response, assessment, and management.^[44]

Our current report finds that indeed, as the response in 2018 indicated, that follow-up has occurred. We solicited responses from the school and police authorities who had responded to the initial report, seeking proof of their follow through.

- The school board requirements were to assure a thorough plan and associated training were conducted. This was verified through documentation received from the County Superintendent's Office. Figure 1 below provides a summary.
- Additional evidence included:
 - Meeting rosters and confirmation of mental health training; an excerpt of the slide deck used in training is shown in Figure 2 below; the training summary is shown in Figure 3 below.
 - School threat topics on regular faculty agendas.

- Reviews conducted in planning meetings.
- Cross-district School Safety Partnership meeting reviews.
- Comprehensive school safety plans from schools across the County

Thank you for your inquiry into documentation substantiating the actions committed to within the December 2017 Santa Cruz Countywide Threat Assessment Plan. Representatives from each public school district in our County were trained on how to become active and competent trainers within their respective districts on this matter and subsequently now serve as an ongoing resource for their districts and school sites. Evidence and further information about these trainings are provided in the attached agendas and correspondence.

All districts have submitted evidence of their attendance at these trainings and implementation of the Plan at their sites. The Santa Cruz County Office of Education continues to convene quarterly meetings of the School Safety Partnership and is evidenced by the attached materials. These meetings are co-facilitated through a partnership between district superintendents and public safety entities including the Santa Cruz County Sheriff's Department, the Santa Cruz County Anti-Crime Team (SCCACT), Watsonville Police Department, Santa Cruz Police Department, and Fire Chiefs representing numerous jurisdictions.

Figure 1. Overview of evidence provided by the County Superintendent of Schools' Office.^[45]

Local Background and Authority

- Threat Assessment Covers: Threats of Violence by a Student
- Grand Jury Investigation (2016)
 - District
 - County
- Countywide Training: Legally Sound, Effective Guidelines for Responding to Student Threats of Violence (Spring 2017)
- Development of Santa Cruz Countywide Threat Assessment Plan (2017)
-

Figure 2. Extract from the Santa Cruz County Office of Education Protocol Training Package with background on training and confirmation of commitment to Grand Jury recommendation to develop Threat Assessment Plan^[46]

In addition to general meetings of the School Safety Partnership, we have launched a professional development series that offers in-depth training on important safety issues that affect students in our county. For the 2018-2019 school year, our professional development series covered the following topics: Threat Assessment Training, Introduction to Incident Command, Safety Plan Completion Workshop, LGBTQ+ Safety, Code Red (Active Shooter), and Drug Recognition: Signs and Symptoms. We also hosted a week-long active shooter scenario training in June 2019 which was made possible through our partnership with the UCSC Police Department. Scotts Valley High School hosted this training at their site.

Figure 3. Training conducted by the County^[47]

In addition, onsite visits conducted by the Grand Jury verified that teachers were trained, aware, and prepared for the eventuality of a threat. The law enforcement requirements were to assure assignment and participation by School Resource Officers (SROs). This was verified by documentation received from the respective law enforcement jurisdictions.^[48]

The Grand Jury has therefore found that the COE and CSO have honored their commitments made in the original report, and have made excellent and continued efforts to ensure safety in our schools.

Report Title: Pajaro Valley Unified School District Bond Measure L

In 2012, the voters of the Pajaro Valley Unified School District (PVUSD) voted to pass Measure L, a bond measure that allocated \$150 million to repair and upgrade the district's campuses. The 2016-17 Grand Jury investigated whether the PVUSD's Citizens' Oversight Committee (COC) was meeting its mandate for financial oversight of bond expenditures and its responsibility to inform the public about the expenditure of bond revenues.^[49] The 2019-20 Grand Jury sought to verify that the COC has been effectively informing the public, reporting to the PVUSD Board, and overseeing the projects.

2020 Status Update: Were Commitments Fulfilled?

Findings:

The PVUSD disagreed with the findings of the 2016-2017 Grand Jury report on 10 of the 11 findings presented. PVUSD provided detailed reasoning for their disagreements. The only finding PVUSD agreed with was #11, Board reporting may be greatly improved once PVUSD's new accounting and business software is implemented. PVUSD's response stated that as of June 8, 2016, PVUSD had purchased new bond reporting software. In April 2017, the new business software was fully implemented.^[50]

Recommendations:

The PVUSD claimed that most of the recommendations had already been implemented. This was the case for recommendations 1-6, and 9 and 10. They agreed that finding 7 required further analysis, and agreed to take the related recommendations (R3, R8) to the Board of Trustees for further analysis.

Recommendation 3 stated: "The District should provide the Trustees and COC a cumulative quarterly change order list, including budget impacts by project and by site."

This Recommendation has been resolved. The PVUSD created the position of Public Information Officer,^[51] responsible for keeping the Board of Trustees, COC and other groups within the PVUSD and community apprised of important decisions and implementation taking place throughout the PVUSD.

Recommendation 10 stated: "The District should ensure its accounting software supports and enhances its efforts in meeting the financial reporting requirements of the California Education Code, the COC's bylaws, and CaLBOC's best practices."

This recommendation was resolved. PVUSD's response stated that as of June 8, 2016, PVUSD had purchased new bond reporting software. In April 2017, the new business software was fully implemented.^[52]

The PVUSD disagreed with recommendation R8, which stated that the COC and the Trustees should meet quarterly to discuss recommendations for reducing costs in accordance with COC bylaws and California Education Code section 15278(b). The PVUSD said this would not be implemented because it is not warranted.

The California League of Bond Oversight Committees (CaLBOC) has published a Best Practices document on School Bond Oversight Committee Operations Standards.^[53]

The 2019-2020 Grand Jury now sees that the COC informs the public, reports to the PVUSD Board, and oversees the project as evidenced on its website,^[54] which states "The Measure L Bond Citizens Oversight Committee (COC) ensures funds are adequately spent. Please visit [Citizens Oversight Committee Website](#) for information on meetings, agendas, minutes, and presentations." The COC should review the CaLBOC standards in order to determine how to comply and improve their communications for governance and community communications.

Report Title: Sharper Solutions - A Sticky Situation That Won't Go Away

In the Grand Jury's 2016-17 Syringe Services Program (SSP) Report, the Board of Supervisors (BoS) was required to respond to recommendations R4-R9 by September 25, 2017, and Health Services Administration (HSA) was required to respond to recommendations R1-R3, R5-R9 by August, 28 2017. During the 2019-20 grand jury term, these two agencies were asked to provide the current status of the recommendations they promised to implement or further analyze.^[55]

The goal of this implementation report is to determine if the pledges made in 2017 by the HSA and BoS have been fulfilled. The Grand Jury was encouraged to see that many of the Grand Jury's 2016-17 SSP report's findings and recommendations were included in the HSA's Syringe Services Program 2017-2019 Biennial Report^[56] and in subsequent reporting to the BoS (see Figure 4).

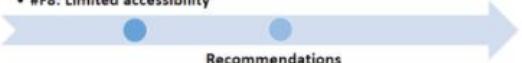
<h3>Feedback and Recommendations</h3> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Grand Jury Report • Advisory Group • HSA 	<p>Recommendations: Grand Jury Report: "Sharper Solutions: 2016-17"</p> <p>Findings</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • #F4: No permanent staffing • #F6: Limited resources • #F8: Limited accessibility  <p>Recommendations</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • #R5: Increase resources for outreach • #R6: Increase accessibility of syringe distribution and collection • #R7: Streamline syringe reporting 
<p>Advisory Group: Recommendations</p>  <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Increase accessibility of the SSP. 2. Maintain secondary exchange. 3. Ensure dedicated resources for the SSP. 4. Improve awareness of current law that prevents criminal prosecution for possession of syringes and associated materials. 5. Transition to a needs-based distribution of syringes. 6. Increase accessibility of syringe disposal kiosks. 7. Utilize 'Citizen Connect' application to report syringe litter. 8. Formalize Advisory Board membership. 	<p>HSA: Recommendations</p>  <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Expand SSP hours to 20 hours per week. 2. Incorporate SSP into the Homeless Persons Health Project clinical field services. 3. Conduct a Syringe Litter study. 4. Plan a pilot program to reduce syringe litter using the 'Citizen Connect' app.

Figure 4. Pages from HSA's 2017-2019 Report to the Board of Supervisors^[57]

2019-20 Status Update - Were Commitments Fulfilled?

HSA and BoS combined their updated responses^[58] through the County Administrative Office (CAO), making it difficult to know who gave what input. BoS seems to have given direct updates to each of their specific recommendations; however, it appears that the HSA did not respond to each specific recommendation; rather, they provided the updates via documents which included information from city and county communications, reports, and BoS meeting agenda submittals. Multiple attempts to clarify which responses were from BoS, HSA, or from both agencies, were unsuccessful.

These are their responses then versus now:

- R1.** *The SSP Advisory Group should include members of the general public, including at least one rehabilitated injection drug user.*

2016-17 response:

HSA: *Has not been implemented but will be implemented in the future*

2019-20 updated response:

BoS: On June 11, 2019, the BoS directed the HSA to return on September 24, 2019 with an ordinance to change the SSP Advisory Group to a seven-member SSP Advisory Commission. In October of 2019 the BoS added chapter 2.125 to the Santa Cruz County code relating to the creation of the SSP Advisory commission, allowing each county supervisor to nominate one person from their district, and two additional members to be at-large appointments designated by the director of the HSA.^[59]

The Grand Jury has not been able to confirm if any members of the general public or rehabilitated injection drug users have been named (or appointed) to this commission.

- R2.** *The SSP should hold public meetings or forums to encourage dialog and address community concerns*

2016-17 response:

HSA: *Has not been implemented, but will be implemented in the future*

2019-20 updated response:

BoS: On December 10, 2019 the BoS directed that HSA hold regular meetings with the Grant Park neighbors to provide an opportunity to exchange ideas, which could include the Human Services Department and other affected agencies.^[60]

- R3.** was not followed up on, as HSA's response was *Will not be implemented*.

- R4.** *The BoS should allocate funds for a permanent budget for the SSP to function as mandated per SSP Policy and Procedures.*

2016-17 response:

BoS: *Requires further analysis*

2019-20 updated response:

BoS: *Has been implemented*^[61]

Notes: The BoS felt it was necessary to evaluate funding opportunities before committing in 2017. By February 2019, SSP was re-organized under the Communicable Diseases Unit of the Public Health Division (PHD) which allowed a new staffing structure for SSP.^[62] It continues to explore ways to access and utilize state funds allocated to address the opioid crisis.

- R5.** *The HSA should devote more time and resources to community outreach to promote rehabilitation and counselling of SSP clients.*

2016-17 response:

HSA and BoS: *Has been implemented*

2019-20 updated response: none provided. However, in the 2019 biennial report HSA recommended that SSP be incorporated into the Homeless Persons Health Project clinical field services.^[63]

R6. *The HSA should implement a mobile needle exchange unit to increase access to SSP services.*

2016-17 responses:

HSA and BoS: Requires further analysis

2019-20 updated responses:

BoS: Requires further analysis^[64]

HSA: On 6/11/2019 presented their biennial report to BoS and presented recommended actions for Board direction in response to the Grand Jury report. In addition to the recommendation that SSP be incorporated into the Homeless Persons Health Project, HSA recommended a mobile exchange unit program to reach out to clients in the field.^[65] SSP will return to BoS at a later date with a plan for review.

R7. *The HSA should post hazardous waste signs with a single contact number for advice or reporting, available 24/7, in areas where syringes are commonly found.*

2016-17 responses:

BoS and HSA: Requires further analysis

2019-20 updated responses:

BoS: Requires further analysis^[66]

HSA: On 6/11/19, the BoS directed that the HSA collaborate with the California Department of Public Health (CDPH) to complete a study of syringe litter. HSA to return with a proposed plan for a possible pilot program that could include using the County's Citizen Connect mobile app to provide information about and reporting syringes.

Further, HSA's PHD is working with the CDPH office of AIDS to evaluate syringe disposal practices in the community, including where syringes are most commonly found. HSA will continue to explore ways to educate and inform the community.^[67]

R8. *The HSA should install and maintain Sharps containers in bathrooms in high needle-use public areas.*

2016-17 responses:

HSA and BoS: Requires further analysis

2019-20 updated responses:

BoS: Will not be implemented^[68]

HSA: As Sharps containers in public bathrooms have been vandalized, HSA is focusing on placement of public kiosks in county & city jurisdictions. On 6/11/19, BoS directed the Board Chair to write a letter to local jurisdictions to work with them to install kiosks at HSA expense. HSA reached out to all local jurisdictions in the County to offer the installation and maintenance of public Sharps Containers and continues to work with partner jurisdictions to identify safe

disposal sites. Also, the City of Santa Cruz formally offered willingness to coordinate with the County for placement of four additional disposal kiosks in the city.^[69]

- R9.** *The SSP should coordinate specific clean-up events throughout the county on a regular basis and report such efforts in their biennial and annual reports.*

2016-17 responses:

HSA and BoS: *Requires further analysis*

2019-20 updated responses:

BoS: *Will not be implemented*^[70]

HSA: The HSA is using models that include more frequent clean-up; partnering with the County Department of Public Works, HSA provides \$40,000 annually to Save Our Shores, Downtown Streets Team, and a private vendor for needle disposal as a part of these groups' existing work. Also, HSA has a \$10,000 contract with a private vendor for enhanced syringe clean-up focusing on the Emeline neighborhood. Once the results of the syringe litter study are analyzed (as described in R7), HSA will focus syringe disposal resources to the areas which data shows are most impacted by discarded needles. Disposal collection data will be included in future biennial reports.^[71]

The HSA has continued to include the Grand Jury's "Sharper Solutions" recommendations in its monthly progress reports to the BoS , including as recently as December 10, 2019 (as of this writing). SSP has been directed to return to the BoS in June of 2020 with recommendations to improve syringe litter reporting and response.^[72]

Report Title: Santa Cruz Metropolitan Transit District - The Bus Stops Here

The 2016-2017 Grand Jury investigation led to 15 findings resulting in 16 separate recommendations. Responses were required from both the METRO Board of Directors (Board) and the METRO Chief Executive Officer (CEO). Overall, answers provided by the Board matched those given by its CEO. Explanations were required for partial or full disagreement with any finding, and for all responses to the recommendations. Of the 16 recommendations, METRO had stated that four "required further analysis", while one recommendation "has not been implemented but will be implemented in the future".

2020 Status Update - Were Commitments Fulfilled?

In November 2019, the METRO CEO provided updates^[73] to the 2017 report responses.

- R9.** *METRO should create a bus stop sponsorship program that underwrites construction of bus stops in accordance with METRO's design standards.*

2017 responses:

BOARD: *Will not be implemented*

CEO: *Requires further analysis*

2019 updated response: METRO recently hired a Marketing, Communications and Customer Service Director in May 2019. The new Director has been tasked with this project. The new Director plans to complete the evaluation of potential bus stops that may be attractive locations for sponsorship or “adoption” as part of a new outdoor advertising program planned for launch in 2020.

R10. *Metro should improve cleanliness at transit facilities.*

R11. *Metro should improve maintenance at transit facilities.*

2017 response:

CEO: requires further analysis.

2019 updated response: Metro has made three significant accomplishments relative to these recommendations:

- In FY17, the METRO Board authorized one additional Custodial Service Worker.
- In compliance with the Federal Transit Administration’s requirement that all agencies receiving federal funds develop a Transit Asset Management Plan, METRO met the federal deadline and now has a plan in place that recognizes
- all assets valued at \$50,000 or greater and establishes a remaining life for the asset and a Preventative Maintenance Program for the proper maintenance of the assets. Such a program now helps METRO regularly maintain the assets, facilitating the asset replacement program set forth in the Capital Improvement Plan.
- Over the past year METRO invested over \$35,000 at Pacific Station remediating water damage and attempting to make the facility water-tight.

R12. *Metro should establish overnight parking at the Scotts Valley Cavallero Transit Center for riders.*

2017 response:

CEO: Requires further analysis

2019 updated response: METRO has posted the Cavallero Transit Center with signs reflecting overnight parking by permit only. Paper permits can be obtained at the Pacific Station customer service booth at a cost of \$5 per day. METRO is also investigating a smartphone application that could eventually replace the paper permits.

R14. *METRO should use easily cleanable materials for bus seats.*

2017 response:

CEO: *Has not been implemented; will be implemented in future.*

2019 updated response: Upon further investigation, METRO discovered that the problem has nothing to do with padded seats. Since the 2017 Grand Jury report, METRO has received five new Gillig buses and will receive four new zero emissions Porterra electric buses next year. All of these buses have been specified with a different seat insert which has an impermeable vinyl cover.

The current Grand Jury commends the METRO CEO, staff, and Board for ongoing efforts to improve and modernize service delivery. Based on our review, METRO has been consistent in fulfilling the commitments made in response to the Grand Jury report. The CEO's 2020 Spring Message^[74] affirms METRO's ongoing commitment to improving services.

Further, the Grand Jury commends METRO for the implementation of smartphone apps for more efficient ticketing and the anticipated Summer 2020 rollout of Automatic Vehicle Location, which will dramatically improve rider experience.^[75] Kudos also for METRO's excellent and comprehensive "Headways Bus Rider's Guide,"^[76] available in English, Spanish, Large Print, also online and via CRS (California Relay Service) for hearing/speech assist.

Conclusion

The 2019-20 Santa Cruz County Grand Jury investigated whether respondents to the five 2016-17 Grand Jury reports examined had honored their commitments. We found that generally, organizations fulfilled the commitments they made to the public. To keep the public informed, all organizations should create and sustain a formal record of the actions they took and continue to take.

Findings

- F1.** The Santa Cruz City Schools Comprehensive School Safety Plans provide a best practice and is a useful resource for parents and the public.
- F2.** The Naval Postgraduate School's Center for Homeland Defense and Security provides an excellent resource for school administration with its K-12 school shooting database.
- F3.** The Pajaro Valley Unified School District can improve its oversight and communications by following the The California League of Bond Oversight Committees (CaLBOC) Best Practices document on School Bond Oversight Committee Operations Standards.

Recommendations

- R1.** Offices of Education throughout the County should publish their comprehensive school safety plans and implementation on their websites for the benefit of parents and the public by December 31, 2020. (F1)

- R2.** The County Office of Education should subscribe to the newsletter of the Naval Postgraduate School for periodic updates on new incidents, analysis of trends, historical case studies, and other findings. (F2)
- R3.** The PVUSD should require its Citizens' Oversight Committee to deliver and publish regular status updates according to the The California League of Bond Oversight Committees (CaLBOC) Best Practices document on School Bond Oversight Committee Operations Standards. (F3)

Required Responses

Respondent	Findings	Recommendations	Respond Within/ Respond By
County Superintendent of Schools	F1, F2	R1, R2	60 Days August 18, 2020
Pajaro Valley Unified School District Board of Trustees	F3	R3	90 Days September 17, 2020

Definitions

Human Services Department (HSD): A county department that provides safety net services to meet the basic needs of individuals and families, ensures the protection of children, the elderly, and dependent adults, and provides job search assistance and job training opportunities to help job seekers become self-sufficient.

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Appendix A

77. The Grand Jury includes this page of instructions in every Response Packet sent to Respondents.
78. California Penal Code, section 933.05. 1998. Response to Grand Jury Findings and Recommendations.
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Appendix A

Instructions for Respondents^[77]

California law PC §933.05^[78] requires the respondent to a Grand Jury report to comment on each finding and recommendation within a report. Explanations for disagreements and timeframes for further implementation or analysis must be provided. Please follow the format below when preparing the responses.

Response Format

1. For the Findings included in this Response Packet, select one of the following responses and provide the required additional information:
 - a. **AGREE** with the Finding, or
 - b. **PARTIALLY DISAGREE** with the Finding and specify the portion of the Finding that is disputed and include an explanation of the reasons therefor, or
 - c. **DISAGREE** with the Finding and provide an explanation of the reasons therefore.
2. For the Recommendations included in this Response Packet, select one of the following actions and provide the required additional information:
 - a. **HAS BEEN IMPLEMENTED**, with a summary regarding the implemented action, or
 - b. **HAS NOT YET BEEN IMPLEMENTED BUT WILL BE IMPLEMENTED IN THE FUTURE**, with a timeframe or expected date for implementation, or
 - c. **REQUIRES FURTHER ANALYSIS**, with an explanation and the scope and parameters of an analysis or study, and a timeframe for that analysis or study; this timeframe shall not exceed six months from the date of publication of the grand jury report, or
 - d. **WILL NOT BE IMPLEMENTED** because it is not warranted or is not reasonable, with an explanation therefore