



## **BELLEVUE ELEMENTARY SCHOOL DISTRICT**

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September 15, 2023

To: Honorable Judge Kevin Seibert

c/o Joyce Barnes, Executive Assistant/Judicial Secretary  
Tuolumne County Superior Court,  
12855 Justice Center Drive, Sonora, CA, 95370

Dear Honorable Judge Kevin Seibert,

I would like to express my appreciation to Foreperson Hector Gonzalez and members of the 2022-2023 Grand Jury for the report dated June 30, 2023, which requested a response to its investigation of education-related items, namely school safety programs at our local schools. As Superintendent-Principal of the Bellevue School District, please accept this letter as our District's formal response.

**The district agrees with the three findings, and believes that all three recommendations have been, and are currently being implemented:**

*(F1.1) "ALICE training is an annual process, with engagement between the local Sheriff's office and the students and staff at Bellevue. The school also runs monthly drills for various emergency situations, which are documented in the school office. Notably, at Bellevue Elementary School, parents are also invited to come into the classrooms for education and participation in active shooter drills."*

*(R1.1) "ALICE training should continue to be yearly, if not twice a year, and the Tuolumne County Sheriff should prioritize and promote engagement with students and education around lockdowns and potential threats to the school."*

**Bellevue has met this recommendation as it conducts ALICE training for staff and students twice a year, conducted by the Tuolumne County Sheriff. Parents are informed ahead of time when ALICE drills will be practiced, and are invited to attend the classroom presentation from Sheriffs. Additional ALICE-Leader training took place in August 2023 for the Superintendent-Principal and Designated Teacher-In-Charge, for continued knowledge building and preparedness. Additional monthly safety drills are practiced by students and staff for various emergency situations.**

*(F1.2) "The school safety plan continues to be updated routinely, staff are provided with it and concurrent education during the training week before the school session starts."*

*(R2.2) "The school safety plan must be updated routinely and staff are provided with it and concurrent education during the training week before the school session starts."*

**Bellevue staff participate in annual safety training before the school year begins, which includes a review of the comprehensive school safety plan. Additionally, the district's safety plan is reviewed and**

updated by members of the School Site Council and the school governing board ahead of annual adoption by March 1st, in accordance with Ed Code 32280-32288 and SB 719 & AB 115.

*(F1.3) "All doors have a quick-lock system, which is effective and smooth in allowing drills and actual lockdowns to occur as quickly as possible. These locks are universally installed across the school and staff interviewed felt comfortable and experienced with using them. There are also many cameras in the gymnasium and outside of the school that are utilizable by staff."*

**Bellevue district agrees that the quick-lock system on all doors provides smooth and effective locking during a lockdown emergency and staff are well trained in their use. While the district has many cameras, additional cameras were added over the summer to continue to strengthen the surveillance system for additional areas.**

*(F1.4) "A great deal of the perimeter of the school is not fenced in and leads to fields or wild lands."*

*(R1.3) "Administration should continue to monitor and evaluate to see if additional fencing is possible to add."*

**The district agrees that continued monitoring of the perimeter for additional fencing is important, even though, as the report noted "fencing is likely not possible due to steep hillsides." The district took steps to address the recommendation when we assessed the open boundaries of the school's land during a site walk in August of 2022. We repaired damaged fencing and installed additional fencing in the upper boundary of the school. Though the outside area is unused land with no large neighborhoods within walking distance, the intention is to increase the visibility of the school's boundary, deter wildlife or other potentially dangerous intruders from entering the campus, and still allow for key points of evacuation for students if necessary. The district will continue to monitor the safety of the school boundary, and include it as an item for further analysis in the review of our site inspections and safety plan.**

In closing, the Bellevue School Board has deliberated on this report at our public meeting on July 18, 2023 and September 7, 2023, and believes that the District continues to make school safety one of its top priorities. Bellevue is a small school, but has a strong sense of community that contributes to a safe school environment. As noted from the report, students feel safe in reporting concerns immediately, and staff provide a strong adult presence and supervision. We are committed to the regular and ongoing monitoring and evaluation of our safety plans and procedures in an effort to provide a safe educational environment for all students, staff and educational partners. Thank you to the Grand Jury for their diligent and dedicated efforts in fulfilling their role to the Court and citizens of Tuolumne County. I would be happy to discuss any further questions that you may have.

Respectfully submitted,



Carmel M. Portillo  
Superintendent-Principal

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