

VIA EMAIL & CERTIFIED MAIL



ZACK ABERNATHY
COUNTY SUPERINTENDENT

August 28, 2023

Grand Jury, County of Tuolumne
12855 Justice Center Drive
Sonora, California 95370

RE: 2022-2023 TUOLUMNE COUNTY GRAND JURY REPORT
Tuolumne County Superintendent of Schools: Responses to "Tuolumne County School Safety Report"

Dear Grand Jury Representatives:

On behalf of the Tuolumne County Superintendent of Schools ("TCSOS" or "Respondent"), I want to thank you for the time and effort taken by the Tuolumne County Grand Jury ("Grand Jury") to conduct its safety analysis of schools within Tuolumne County.

TCSOS' responses to the Grand Jury's findings and recommendations are set forth below in accordance with the response format required by Penal Code section 933.05, which requires TCSOS to respond to findings and recommendations as follows:

- (1) TCSOS agrees with the finding; or
- (2) TCSOS disagrees wholly or partially with the finding, in which case the response shall specify the portion of the finding that is disputed and shall include an explanation of the reasons therefor.

(Penal Code section 933.05(a)(1)-(a)(2).) As to each Grand Jury recommendation, TCSOS shall report one of the following actions:

- (1) The recommendation has been implemented, with a summary regarding the implemented action;
- (2) The recommendation has not yet been implemented, but will be implemented in the future, with a timeframe for implementation;
- (3) 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 officer or head of the agency or department being investigated or reviewed, including the governing body of the public agency when applicable; or
- (4) The recommendation will not be implemented because it is not warranted or is not reasonable, with an explanation therefor.

(Penal Code section 933.05(b)(1)-(b)(4).)

Please do not hesitate to contact me if you require further information.

Sincerely,

Zachary J. Abernathy
County Superintendent
Tuolumne County Superintendent of Schools

**Superintendent Abernathy's Response Attachment to Grand Jury Report dated June 30,
2023: Tuolumne County School Safety Report**

The Grand Jury Report includes findings and recommendations for 12 schools and/or districts, as well as recommendations for TCSOS. To maintain consistency, the below responses are organized in a manner that mirrors the format within the Grand Jury Report. Specifically, I respond to the findings and recommendations for each of the 12 schools and/or districts, and finally respond to the recommendations to TCSOS.

I. Bellevue School

A. Responses to Findings

Finding 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.

TCSOS agrees with this finding.

Finding 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.

TCSOS agrees with this finding.

Finding 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 the staff interviewed felt comfortable and experienced with using them. There are also many cameras in the gymnasium and outside of the school that are usable by staff.

TCSOS agrees with this finding.

Finding F1.4: A great deal of the perimeter of the school is not fenced in and leads to fields or wild lands.

TCSOS agrees with this finding.

B. Responses to Recommendations

Recommendation 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. (F1.1)

This recommendation will not be implemented by TCSOS because it is not warranted and is not reasonable. TCSOS recognizes the importance of this recommendation, but TCSOS does not have statutory authority to require Belleview School to conduct ALICE training on an annual or biannual basis. However, TCSOS will recommend that Belleview School consider this recommendation as part of Belleview School's development of its comprehensive school safety plan.

Recommendation R1.2: 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 (F1.2)

This recommendation will not be implemented by TCSOS because it is not warranted and is not reasonable. TCSOS recognizes the importance of this recommendation, but TCSOS does not have statutory authority to require Belleview School to routinely update its school safety plan, provide its safety plan to staff, and provide concurrent education during the training week before the school session starts. However, TCSOS will recommend that Belleview School consider this recommendation as part of Belleview School's development of its comprehensive school safety plan.

Recommendation R1.3: Administration should continue to monitor and evaluate to see if additional fencing is possible to add. (F1.4)

This recommendation will not be implemented by TCSOS because it is not warranted and is not reasonable. TCSOS recognizes the importance of this recommendation, but TCSOS does not have statutory authority to require Belleview School to have its administration continue to monitor and evaluate if additional fencing is possible to add. However, TCSOS will recommend that Belleview School consider this recommendation as part of Belleview School's development of its comprehensive school safety plan.

II. Big Oak Flat School District

A. Responses to Findings

Finding F2.1: ALICE training is an annual process for staff, with engagement between local law enforcement. The school also runs monthly drills for various emergency situations, including but not limited to fire, earthquake and lockdown drills and active shooter drills, which are documented in the school office.

TCSOS agrees with this finding.

Finding F2.2: The school safety plan continues to be updated routinely. Staff and substitutes are provided with updated plans and concurrent education during the training week before the school session starts.

TCSOS agrees with this finding.

Finding F2.3: There are cameras covering about 70% of the access areas on the campuses. About 50% of the campuses are fenced.

TCSOS agrees with this finding.

B. Responses to Recommendations

Recommendation R2.1: ALICE training should be conducted yearly with staff and students, if not twice a year. (F2.1)

This recommendation will not be implemented by TCSOS because it is not warranted and is not reasonable. TCSOS recognizes the importance of this recommendation, but TCSOS does not have statutory authority to require Big Oak Flat School District to conduct yearly or biannual ALICE training with staff and students. However, TCSOS will recommend that Big Oak Flat School District consider this recommendation as part of Big Oak Flat School District's development of its comprehensive school safety plan.

Recommendation R2.2: The district should ensure the safety plan continues to be updated routinely, and that all teachers, staff students and parents are provided with copies and pertinent training to develop current understanding. (F2.2)

This recommendation will not be implemented by TCSOS because it is not warranted and is not reasonable. TCSOS recognizes the importance of this recommendation, but TCSOS does not have statutory authority to require Big Oak Flat School District to ensure that it continually updates its safety plan routinely or that its teachers, staff, students, and parents receive copies and pertinent training. However, TCSOS will recommend that Big Oak Flat School District consider this recommendation as part of Big Oak Flat School District's development of its comprehensive school safety plan.

Recommendation R2.3: Administration should evaluate the viability of adding additional fencing. (F2.3)

This recommendation will not be implemented by TCSOS because it is not warranted and is not reasonable. TCSOS recognizes the importance of this recommendation, but TCSOS does not have statutory authority to require Big Oak Flat School District's administration to evaluate the viability of adding additional fencing. However, TCSOS will recommend that Big Oak Flat School District consider this recommendation as part of Big Oak Flat School District's development of its comprehensive school safety plan.

III. Columbia Elementary

A. Responses to Findings

Finding F3.1: The school conducts various drills, including active shooter scenarios, in collaboration with local police and fire departments. However, no such drill was held last year.

TCSOS agrees with this finding.

Finding F3.2: Columbia Elementary employs the use of supplies in all classrooms with extended lockdown resources, though it was noted that these may not have been recently updated.

TCSOS agrees with this finding.

Finding F3.3: During recess periods, the student-to-teacher ratio stands at 50 to 1. For special events, security is managed by coaches and administrative staff.

TCSOS agrees with this finding.

B. Responses to Recommendations

Recommendation R3.1: Ensure the continuation of active shooter and other emergency drills, ideally in collaboration with local law enforcement and emergency services. (F3.1)

This recommendation will not be implemented by TCSOS because it is not warranted and is not reasonable. TCSOS recognizes the importance of this recommendation, but TCSOS does not have statutory authority to require Columbia Elementary to ensure the continuation of active shooter and other emergency drills. However, TCSOS will recommend that Columbia Elementary consider this recommendation as part of Columbia Elementary's development of its comprehensive school safety plan.

Recommendation R3.2: Regularly update and inspect the content of the classroom supplies available to ensure their readiness for prolonged lockdowns. (F3.2)

This recommendation will not be implemented by TCSOS because it is not warranted and is not reasonable. TCSOS recognizes the importance of this recommendation, but TCSOS does not have statutory authority to require Columbia Elementary to regularly update and inspect available classroom supplies to ensure readiness for prolonged lockdowns. However, TCSOS will recommend that Columbia Elementary consider this recommendation as part of Columbia Elementary's development of its comprehensive school safety plan.

Recommendation R3.3: Consider reducing the student-to-teacher ratio during recess periods to ensure better supervision and safety. (F3.3)

This recommendation will not be implemented by TCSOS because it is not warranted and is not reasonable. TCSOS recognizes the importance of this recommendation, but TCSOS does not have statutory authority to require Columbia Elementary to consider reducing, or reduce, the student-to-teacher ratio during recess. However, TCSOS will recommend that Columbia Elementary consider this recommendation as part of Columbia Elementary's development of its comprehensive school safety plan.

IV. Curtis Creek Elementary School

A. Responses to Findings

Finding F4.1: The school has an accessible safety plan, which is deemed important by the administration. The plan is executed with the aid of radios used by all staff members, and it is reviewed and edited in collaboration with the Tuolumne County Sheriff's office.

TCSOS agrees with this finding.

Finding F4.2: Safety Drills are conducted monthly and documented in the school's office. The school has also participated in ALICE training, provided by law enforcement, and holds "Get Away" drills specifically for active shooter scenarios.

TCSOS agrees with this finding.

Finding F4.3: When asked about the plan to have children return to campus after they have practiced the drill, interviewees didn't have a systematic plan.

TCSOS agrees with this finding.

Finding F4.4: All visitors to the campus are challenged and encouraged to wear identification badges.

TCSOS agrees with this finding.

Finding F4.5: The school's campus is only 50% fenced, leaving certain areas exposed to potential unwanted guests, while also providing student with potential escape routes in emergencies.

TCSOS agrees with this finding.

B. Responses to Recommendations

Recommendation R4.1: To enhance the effectiveness of the safety plan, it would be beneficial to ensure that all staff members, including substitutes, receive a copy of the plan and are properly trained. This will ensure continuity and efficiency in case of an emergency. (F4.1)

This recommendation will not be implemented by TCSOS because it is not warranted and is not reasonable. TCSOS recognizes the importance of this recommendation, but TCSOS does not have statutory authority to require Curtis Creek Elementary School to ensure that all staff members receive a copy of the plan and are properly trained. However, TCSOS will recommend that Curtis Creek Elementary School consider this recommendation as part of Curtis Creek Elementary School's development of its comprehensive school safety plan.

Recommendation R4.2: It is commendable that the school is actively engaging in drills and training sessions. To further improve, the school could consider

incorporating a wider variety of emergency situations into their drill regimen[t] [sic]. Additionally, involving students more directly in these drills can help them understand what to do in a real-life scenario. (F4.2)

This recommendation will not be implemented by TCSOS because it is not warranted and is not reasonable. TCSOS recognizes the importance of this recommendation, but TCSOS does not have statutory authority to require Curtis Creek Elementary School to consider incorporating a wider variety of emergency situations into their drill regiment or involving students more directly in the drills. However, TCSOS will recommend that Curtis Creek Elementary School consider this recommendation as part of Curtis Creek Elementary School's development of its comprehensive school safety plan.

Recommendation R4.3: The school should establish a system for ensuring that students know how and when the "Get Away" drill or actual emergency event has ended and how they should return to the campus safely. (F4.3)

This recommendation will not be implemented by TCSOS because it is not warranted and is not reasonable. TCSOS recognizes the importance of this recommendation, but TCSOS does not have statutory authority to require Curtis Creek Elementary School to establish a system to ensure that students know how and when the "Get Away" drill or actual emergency event has ended and how to return to campus safely. However, TCSOS will recommend that Curtis Creek Elementary School consider this recommendation as part of Curtis Creek Elementary School's development of its comprehensive school safety plan.

Recommendation R4.4: While the practice of challenging visitors and requiring identification is excellent, it could be supplemented with a more formal check-in/check-out system for visitors. This could help track non-staff adults on campus and ensure that everyone on campus has a reason to be there. (F4.4)

This recommendation will not be implemented by TCSOS because it is not warranted and is not reasonable. TCSOS recognizes the importance of this recommendation, but TCSOS does not have statutory authority to require Curtis Creek Elementary School to utilize a more formal check-in/check-out system for visitors. However, TCSOS will recommend that Curtis Creek Elementary School consider this recommendation as part of Curtis Creek Elementary School's development of its comprehensive school safety plan.

Recommendation R4.5: To better secure the school grounds, consider completing the fencing around the entire campus. This would help control access points to the school and potentially deter unwanted guests. If this is not feasible due to the natural environment, other security measures could be explored, such as additional surveillance in unfenced areas or strategic landscaping to deter unauthorized access. (F4.5)

This recommendation will not be implemented by TCSOS because it is not warranted and is not reasonable. TCSOS recognizes the importance of this recommendation, but TCSOS does not have

statutory authority to require Curtis Creek Elementary School to consider or construct fencing around the entire campus, or to consider other security measures for unfenced areas. However, TCSOS will recommend that Curtis Creek Elementary School consider this recommendation as part of Curtis Creek Elementary School's development of its comprehensive school safety plan.

V. Gold Rush Charter School

A. Responses to Findings

Finding F5.1: While ALICE training is part of the yearly plan for The Country School, it is not clear if this occurred during the COVID years amidst school closures and times of uncertainty. The most recent drill was in January 2022 and an interviewee stated that the school was actively trying to schedule another drill for this calendar school year but was waiting on Sheriff availability. The ALICE training is listed in the school's safety plan.

TCSOS agrees with this finding.

Finding F5.2: There are no cameras on school premises. While the school does try to greet visitors to the campus and give sticker badges stating that the visitor has been approved by the office, this does not happen always. Of note, during the interview with the grand jury, a repair person from an outside hired agency, entered the interview room while in search of the main office. This demonstrates that it is possible to walk on campus and not be directly greeted by staff.

TCSOS agrees with this finding.

Finding F5.3: Communication between the main office and individual classrooms is supported through radios provided to all teachers and staff. At this time, the PA system is not working effectively in all areas of the school.

TCSOS agrees with this finding.

B. Responses to Recommendations

Recommendation R5.1: Administration should continue to support and update the safety plan. The posted evacuation maps are very helpful to substitutes who may be less familiar with the campus, but it would also be extremely helpful to give substitutes a copy of the safety plan for perusal as they are coming to work. (F5.1)

This recommendation will not be implemented by TCSOS because it is not warranted and is not reasonable. TCSOS recognizes the importance of this recommendation, but TCSOS does not have statutory authority to require Gold Rush Charter School to ensure that administration continues to support and update the safety plan, or to give substitutes a copy of the safety plan as they arrive to work. However, TCSOS will recommend that Gold Rush Charter School consider this

recommendation as part of Gold Rush Charter School's development of its comprehensive school safety plan.

Recommendation R5.2: Cameras on campus are advisable, if at least to monitor the main entrances and exits. Many ways to walk onto campus exist and staff are not always able to greet and have them go through correct badging in process. (F5.2)

This recommendation will not be implemented by TCSOS because it is not warranted and is not reasonable. TCSOS recognizes the importance of this recommendation, but TCSOS does not have statutory authority to require Gold Rush Charter School to utilize cameras on campus. However, TCSOS will recommend that Gold Rush Charter School consider this recommendation as part of Gold Rush Charter School's development of its comprehensive school safety plan.

Recommendation R5.3: An updated PA system offers clear, fast, and universal communication to all teachers and students, and staff should work to update this PA system as soon as possible. (F5.3)

This recommendation will not be implemented by TCSOS because it is not warranted and is not reasonable. TCSOS recognizes the importance of this recommendation, but TCSOS does not have statutory authority to require Gold Rush Charter School to update its public announcement system as soon as possible. However, TCSOS will recommend that Gold Rush Charter School consider this recommendation as part of Gold Rush Charter School's development of its comprehensive school safety plan.

VI. Jamestown Elementary School

A. Responses to Findings

Finding F6.1: Jamestown Elementary employs the ALICE training methodology, which is undertaken annually with the involvement of the local law enforcement offices. The school conducts an active shooter drill once a year in cooperation with the sheriff. Besides ALICE, fire and earthquake drills are also conducted.

TCSOS agrees with this finding.

Finding F6.2: The school safety plan at Jamestown Elementary is readily accessible and is executed by the administration. It is updated routinely, and staff training occurs before the school year starts. The staff training logs are maintained by the school secretary.

TCSOS agrees with this finding.

Finding F6.3: Jamestown Elementary's campus is mostly fenced in, except for a small portion in the front. The school has security cameras installed. The school follows a safety protocol for releasing students to parents in case of an

evacuation, and it has practices in place for firearm/weapon prevention, such as searching backpacks as necessary.

TCSOS agrees with this finding.

B. Responses to Recommendations

Recommendation R6.1: Jamestown Elementary should continue to complete ALICE trainings and consider biannual all-school training sessions to ensure that students are reminded of the concepts. This will ensure that all individuals responsible for students are prepared to execute the safety plan in an emergency (F6.1)

This recommendation will not be implemented by TCSOS because it is not warranted and is not reasonable. TCSOS recognizes the importance of this recommendation, but TCSOS does not have statutory authority to require Jamestown Elementary School to complete ALICE trainings or consider biannual all-school training sessions. However, TCSOS will recommend that Jamestown Elementary School consider this recommendation as part of Jamestown Elementary School's development of its comprehensive school safety plan.

Recommendation R6.2: The school should establish a regular schedule for revising and updating the safety plan (making this information transparent to both staff and parents). Furthermore, involve more staff members in the maintenance of training logs to ensure accuracy and comprehensive coverage. (F6.2)

This recommendation will not be implemented by TCSOS because it is not warranted and is not reasonable. TCSOS recognizes the importance of this recommendation, but TCSOS does not have statutory authority to require Jamestown Elementary School to establish a regular schedule for revising and updating its safety plan, or to involve more staff in the maintenance of training logs. However, TCSOS will recommend that Jamestown Elementary School consider this recommendation as part of Jamestown Elementary School's development of its comprehensive school safety plan.

Recommendation R6.3: The school should complete the fencing of the remaining portion of the campus to ensure comprehensive perimeter security. Also, the school should add more cameras around the campus, especially in areas where student activity is high. (F6.3)

This recommendation will not be implemented by TCSOS because it is not warranted and is not reasonable. TCSOS recognizes the importance of this recommendation, but TCSOS does not have statutory authority to require Jamestown Elementary School to complete or construct the fencing around campus or add more cameras. However, TCSOS will recommend that Jamestown Elementary School consider this recommendation as part of Jamestown Elementary School's development of its comprehensive school safety plan.

VII. Sonora Elementary School

A. Responses to Findings

Finding F7.1: The school does not log its regular monthly drills, which might limit the ability to track progress and areas for improvement.

TCSOS agrees with this finding.

Finding F7.2: Sonora Elementary has an active shooter protocol in place, with ALICE training that involves parent participation.

TCSOS agrees with this finding.

Finding F7.3: The school's camera system is not consistently monitored throughout the day, and there are no cameras in the parking lot. This could potentially leave areas of the school vulnerable.

TCSOS agrees with this finding.

B. Responses to Recommendations

Recommendation R7.1: The school should institute a system for logging and reviewing all safety drills. The documentation should include recording the date, time, type of drill, and debrief to identify any issues arising from the drill. Regular reviews of these logs could help identify trends, areas for improvement, and ensure consistency in safety practices. (F7.1)

This recommendation will not be implemented by TCSOS because it is not warranted and is not reasonable. TCSOS recognizes the importance of this recommendation, but TCSOS does not have statutory authority to require Sonora Elementary School to institute a system for logging and reviewing all safety drills. However, TCSOS will recommend that Sonora Elementary School consider this recommendation as part of Sonora Elementary School's development of its comprehensive school safety plan.

Recommendation R7.2: Continue the existing ALICE training protocol. (F7.2)

This recommendation will not be implemented by TCSOS because it is not warranted and is not reasonable. TCSOS recognizes the importance of this recommendation, but TCSOS does not have statutory authority to require Sonora Elementary School to continue its existing ALICE training protocol. However, TCSOS will recommend that Sonora Elementary School consider this recommendation as part of Sonora Elementary School's development of its comprehensive school safety plan.

Recommendation R7.3: Evaluate the current camera surveillance system. This evaluation should aim to identify blind spots, including the parking lot, and periods during the day when monitoring is lax or non-existent. (F7.3)

This recommendation will not be implemented by TCSOS because it is not warranted and is not reasonable. TCSOS recognizes the importance of this recommendation, but TCSOS does not have statutory authority to require Sonora Elementary School to evaluate its current camera surveillance system in an effort to identify blind spots or periods when monitoring is lax or non-existent. However, TCSOS will recommend that Sonora Elementary School consider this recommendation as part of Sonora Elementary School's development of its comprehensive school safety plan.

VIII. Sonora High School

A. Responses to Findings

Finding F8.1: Sonora High conducts ALICE training (Appendix 1) as part of their safety plan, which staff training taking place on the days before the school session starts. The school performed two fire drills, one lockdown drill, and one earthquake drill this academic year.

TCSOS agrees with this finding.

Finding F8.2: The school safety plan is accessible and considered important by the administration. Substitutes receive binders with safety information, ensuring they are informed and prepared in case of emergencies.

TCSOS agrees with this finding.

Finding F8.3: Sonora High has implemented several security measures, including numerous cameras, four non-uniformed campus security supervisors, and a facial recognition app for visitors, which sends instant notifications to staff.

TCSOS agrees with this finding.

Finding F8.4: The campus is not fully fenced, with only 50% of the perimeter secured.

TCSOS agrees with this finding.

Finding F8.5: Firearm and weapon prevention practices at Sonora High include searching backpacks as deemed necessary, using wands if required, and employing a monthly dog search service.

TCSOS agrees with this finding.

Finding F8.6: Despite having a considerable number of students leaving for classes at Columbia College, the school does not have a system in place for regulating those coming on and off campus.

TCSOS agrees with this finding.

B. Responses to Recommendations

Recommendation R8.1: Regular ALICE Training and Drills – Conduct ALICE Training for staff and students more frequently to ensure that are well-prepared for potential active shooter situations. Maintain and updated log of all drills and trainings. Regularly practicing different scenarios can help build confidence and familiarity with emergency response procedures. (F8.1)

This recommendation will not be implemented by TCSOS because it is not warranted and is not reasonable. TCSOS recognizes the importance of this recommendation, but TCSOS does not have statutory authority to require Sonora High School to conduct ALICE training for staff and students more frequently, to maintain an updated log of all drills and trainings, or to regularly practice different emergency response scenarios. However, TCSOS will recommend that Sonora High School consider this recommendation as part of Sonora High School's development of its comprehensive school safety plan.

Recommendation R8.2: Assess and Update Safety Plans – Regularly review and update the school safety plan to ensure it remains relevant and effective. Include input from staff, students, parents, and law enforcement agencies in the review process to ensure all perspectives are considered and the plan reflects best practices in school safety. (F8.2)

This recommendation will not be implemented by TCSOS because it is not warranted and is not reasonable. TCSOS recognizes the importance of this recommendation, but TCSOS does not have statutory authority to require Sonora High School to regularly review and update its school safety plan and include input from staff, students, parents, and law enforcement. However, TCSOS will recommend that Sonora High School consider this recommendation as part of Sonora High School's development of its comprehensive school safety plan.

Recommendation R8.3: Implement an enhanced access control system to control access to offices and other campus areas. This many include using electronic access cards or keypads that require a code for entry. Regular audits of access permissions can help maintain the security of restricted areas. (F8.3)

This recommendation will not be implemented by TCSOS because it is not warranted and is not reasonable. TCSOS recognizes the importance of this recommendation, but TCSOS does not have statutory authority to require Sonora High School to implement an enhanced access control system to control access to offices and other campus areas, or to conduct regular audits of access permissions. However, TCSOS will recommend that Sonora High School consider this recommendation as part of Sonora High School's development of its comprehensive school safety plan.

Recommendation R8.4: Consider increasing the fencing perimeter in order to reduce the risk of unauthorized entry. In addition, consider installing more surveillance cameras and lighting around the school grounds,

especially in the back parking lot, to deter potential threats and improve overall safety. (F8.4)

This recommendation will not be implemented by TCSOS because it is not warranted and is not reasonable. TCSOS recognizes the importance of this recommendation, but TCSOS does not have statutory authority to require Sonora High School to consider increasing the fencing perimeter and installing more surveillance cameras and lighting. However, TCSOS will recommend that Sonora High School consider this recommendation as part of Sonora High School's development of its comprehensive school safety plan.

Recommendation R8.5: Continue collaborating with local law enforcement agencies to foster a healthy relationship. Regularly involve them in safety drills, training, and planning. Continue use of searches, dogs, and other means to ensure that unsafe items are not being brought on campus. (F8.5)

This recommendation will not be implemented by TCSOS because it is not warranted and is not reasonable. TCSOS recognizes the importance of this recommendation, but TCSOS does not have statutory authority to require Sonora High School to continue collaborating with local law enforcement agencies, to regularly involve these agencies in safety drills, training, and planning, or to continue using searches, dogs, and other means as part of campus security. However, TCSOS will recommend that Sonora High School consider this recommendation as part of Sonora High School's development of its comprehensive school safety plan.

Recommendation R8.6: Monitor Student Movement on and off Campus – Develop a system for tracking and regulating students who leave the campus for classes at Columbia College or for other reasons. This may include a sign-in/sign-out sheet or app, ID scanning, or other methods to ensure the school is aware of students' whereabouts during school hours. (F8.6)

This recommendation will not be implemented by TCSOS because it is not warranted and is not reasonable. TCSOS recognizes the importance of this recommendation, but TCSOS does not have statutory authority to require Sonora High School to develop a system for tracking and regulating students who leave campus. However, TCSOS will recommend that Sonora High School consider this recommendation as part of Sonora High School's development of its comprehensive school safety plan.

IX. Soulsbyville Elementary School

A. Responses to Findings

Finding F9.1: Like most of the schools in the county, Soulsbyville has both in-house ALICE training and assistance by local law enforcement. Full time teachers receive safety training, but substitutes must rely on safety plans in the classroom. They do not have cameras and 65% fencing which includes athletic fields and play area.

TCSOS agrees with this finding.

Finding F9.2: There is not much foot traffic from the surrounding neighborhoods, but all people entering the campus are challenged by any staff members if they do not check into the office. The only crosswalk is situated in a bad place and has buses blocking the view of both pedestrian and oncoming traffic. The Head Start program is closest to the cross walk. The lack of a crossing guard presents a problem for both pedestrians & traffic.

TCSOS agrees with this finding.

Finding F9.3: The ratio of teachers to students at recess is 1:35; on field trips it is 1:10. During hosted school events staff and parents are used as security. After a lock down the students must have their parents come to get them released. Students can contact an adult or use the drop box to report safety concerns.

TCSOS agrees with this finding.

B. Responses to Recommendations

Recommendation R9.1: Staff should maintain and follow up in ALICE Training for both students and staff, and involvement with local law enforcement is optimal. Staff should also continue to update and review safety plans if possible. (F9.1)

This recommendation will not be implemented by TCSOS because it is not warranted and is not reasonable. TCSOS recognizes the importance of this recommendation, but TCSOS does not have statutory authority to require Soulsbyville Elementary School to maintain and follow up in ALICE training for students and staff, to involve local law enforcement in this training, or to update and review safety plans continually. However, TCSOS will recommend that Soulsbyville Elementary School consider this recommendation as part of Soulsbyville Elementary School's development of its comprehensive school safety plan.

Recommendation R9.2: Updates to foot path and traffic flow would be optimal, but given geographic location, this provides many challenges. The blind spot where the crosswalk is located should be evaluated. (F9.2)

This recommendation will not be implemented by TCSOS because it is not warranted and is not reasonable. TCSOS recognizes the importance of this recommendation, but TCSOS does not have statutory authority to require Soulsbyville Elementary School to update the foot path and traffic flow on campus, specifically considering the blind spot where the crosswalk is located. However, TCSOS will recommend that Soulsbyville Elementary School consider this recommendation as part of Soulsbyville Elementary School's development of its comprehensive school safety plan.

Recommendation R9.3: Soulsbyville Elementary school should continue to uphold a high standard in considering their student to adult ratio. Soulsbyville should be commended for having much supervision and small ratios for students at recess.

This recommendation will not be implemented by TCSOS because it is not warranted and is not reasonable. TCSOS recognizes the importance of this recommendation, but TCSOS does not have statutory authority to require Soulsbyville Elementary School to continue to maintain their student-to-adult ratio for supervision at recess. However, TCSOS will recommend that Soulsbyville Elementary School consider this recommendation as part of Soulsbyville Elementary School's development of its comprehensive school safety plan.

X. Summerville Elementary School

A. Responses to Findings

Finding F10.1: Staff training occurs before the start of the school year and includes two ALICE training courses annually.

TCSOS agrees with this finding.

Finding F10.2: Summerville Elementary School places emphasis on preparedness for a potential lockdown. Classrooms are equipped with flip charts for substitutes, and each room had emergency and water supplies.

TCSOS agrees with this finding.

Finding F10.3: The school has ceased locking its gates and fences based on county advice to facilitate emergency response and to allow children access in the event of a shooter. However, this practice appears to be a point of concern for school administration.

TCSOS agrees with this finding.

Finding F10.4: The student to adult ratio during recess at Summerville Elementary School is 12:1, which is a reasonable ratio that allows for adequate supervision during these periods.

TCSOS agrees with this finding.

Finding F10.5: The school has mechanisms in place for students to report safety concerns, including options to send an email or talk to a teacher.

TCSOS agrees with this finding.

B. Responses to Recommendations

Recommendation R10.1: Continue to prioritize and invest in regular safety drills and staff training, including ALICE training. Given the comprehensive nature of this training, consider extending this training to substitute teachers to ensure a uniform response to potential emergencies across all staff. (F10.1)

This recommendation will not be implemented by TCSOS because it is not warranted and is not reasonable. TCSOS recognizes the importance of this recommendation, but TCSOS does not have statutory authority to require Summerville Elementary School to prioritize or invest in regular safety drills and staff training, including ALICE training, or to consider extending this training to substitute teachers. However, TCSOS will recommend that Summerville Elementary School consider this recommendation as part of Summerville Elementary School's development of its comprehensive school safety plan.

Recommendation R10.2: The presence of flip charts for substitutes and emergency supplies in the classrooms indicates commendable preparedness. However, it may be beneficial to include a wider range of emergency supplies, including first aid kits, in each classroom. (F10.2)

This recommendation will not be implemented by TCSOS because it is not warranted and is not reasonable. TCSOS recognizes the importance of this recommendation, but TCSOS does not have statutory authority to require Summerville Elementary School to include a wider range of emergency supplies in each classroom. However, TCSOS will recommend that Summerville Elementary School consider this recommendation as part of Summerville Elementary School's development of its comprehensive school safety plan.

Recommendation R10.3: Engage in a dialogue with county officials to gain clarity on the policy regarding the locking of gates and fences. Exploring options for gates that allow emergency access while maintaining a secure perimeter could be a potential solution. (F10.3)

This recommendation will not be implemented by TCSOS because it is not warranted and is not reasonable. TCSOS recognizes the importance of this recommendation, but TCSOS does not have statutory authority to require Summerville Elementary School to obtain clarity from county officials regarding locking gates and fences, or to explore options to utilize gates that allow emergency access while maintaining a secure perimeter. However, TCSOS will recommend that Summerville Elementary School consider this recommendation as part of Summerville Elementary School's development of its comprehensive school safety plan.

Recommendation R10.4: Maintain the commendable current student to adult ratio during recess. Regularly evaluate this ratio to ensure it continues to provide adequate supervision. (F10.4)

This recommendation will not be implemented by TCSOS because it is not deemed reasonable. TCSOS recognizes the importance of this recommendation, but TCSOS does not have statutory authority to require Summerville Elementary School to regularly evaluate its student-to-adult ratio during recess. However, TCSOS will recommend that Summerville Elementary School consider this recommendation as part of Summerville Elementary School's development of its comprehensive school safety plan.

Recommendation R10.5: While the existing channels for reporting safety concerns are good, introduce an anonymous reporting system to encourage more

students to report any safety issues without fear of being identified.
(F10.5)

This recommendation will not be implemented by TCSOS because it is not warranted and is not reasonable. TCSOS recognizes the importance of this recommendation, but TCSOS does not have statutory authority to require Summerville Elementary School to utilize an anonymous reporting system for safety issues. However, TCSOS will recommend that Summerville Elementary School consider this recommendation as part of Summerville Elementary School's development of its comprehensive school safety plan.

XI. Summerville High School

A. Responses to Findings

Finding F11.1: Summerville High School has implemented ALICE training and engages with law enforcement for planning and preparedness.

TCSOS agrees with this finding.

Finding F11.2: The safety plan at Summerville High School is not only accessible but also continually updated.

TCSOS agrees with this finding.

Finding F11.3: The campus is partially fenced, and access control is not absolute, as individuals can walk in unchallenged.

TCSOS agrees with this finding.

Finding F11.4: Most classrooms are equipped for lockdowns with emergency supplies, though not all have food and water.

TCSOS agrees with this finding.

Finding F11.5: The school employs practices to prevent weapons on campus, such as monitoring break times and behaviors as well as utilizing surprise drug dog visits. They also distribute a classroom discipline policy that outlines the consequences of bringing weapons to school.

TCSOS agrees with this finding.

Finding F11.6: The ratio of students to adults during recess and breaks is between 30 and 35 to 1.

TCSOS agrees with this finding.

Finding F11.7: Students are encouraged to report safety concerns to any adult staff member, reinforcing the message "if you see something, say something".

TCSOS agrees with this finding.

B. Responses to Recommendations

Recommendation R11.1: Continue to engage with local law enforcement to practice and review the ALICE training. (F11.1)

This recommendation will not be implemented by TCSOS because it is not warranted and is not reasonable. TCSOS recognizes the importance of this recommendation, but TCSOS does not have statutory authority to require Summerville High School to continue to engage with local law enforcement to practice and review the ALICE training. However, TCSOS will recommend that Summerville High School consider this recommendation as part of Summerville High School's development of its comprehensive school safety plan.

Recommendation R11.2: Ensure that all substitute teachers receive the same level of safety training as full-time staff. Look into providing them with access to the online training and certification that full-time staff members receive. (F11.2)

This recommendation will not be implemented by TCSOS because it is not warranted and is not reasonable. TCSOS recognizes the importance of this recommendation, but TCSOS does not have statutory authority to require Summerville High School to continue to ensure that all substitute teachers receive same training as full-time staff, including giving them access to online training and certification provided to full-time staff members. However, TCSOS will recommend that Summerville High School consider this recommendation as part of Summerville High School's development of its comprehensive school safety plan.

Recommendation R11.3: Consider implementing additional access control measures, such as secured entrances or more comprehensive check-in procedures for visitors. Additionally consider increasing the fence perimeter around the campus and extend camera coverage to the tennis courts and softball fields, which currently lack surveillance. (F11.3)

This recommendation will not be implemented by TCSOS because it is not warranted and is not reasonable. TCSOS recognizes the importance of this recommendation, but TCSOS does not have statutory authority to require Summerville High School to continue to consider implementing additional access control measures, increasing the fence perimeter, or extending camera coverage to the tennis courts and softball fields. However, TCSOS will recommend that Summerville High School consider this recommendation as part of Summerville High School's development of its comprehensive school safety plan.

Recommendation R11.4: Ensure that all classrooms are fully equipped for lockdown situation, including the provision of food and water in the safety buckets. (F11.4)

This recommendation will not be implemented by TCSOS because it is not warranted and is not reasonable. TCSOS recognizes the importance of this recommendation, but TCSOS does not have statutory authority to require Summerville High School to continue to ensure that all classrooms

are fully equipped for a lockdown situation. However, TCSOS will recommend that Summerville High School consider this recommendation as part of Summerville High School's development of its comprehensive school safety plan.

Recommendation R11.5: Reinstate surprise drug dog visits and continually enforce the classroom discipline policy. Consider additional preventative measures such as metal detectors or increased supervision in areas where students may potentially conceal weapons. (F11.5)

This recommendation will not be implemented by TCSOS because it is not warranted and is not reasonable. TCSOS recognizes the importance of this recommendation, but TCSOS does not have statutory authority to require Summerville High School to continue to reinstate surprise drug dog visits, continually enforce the classroom discipline policy, or consider additional preventative measures such as metal detectors. However, TCSOS will recommend that Summerville High School consider this recommendation as part of Summerville High School's development of its comprehensive school safety plan.

Recommendation R11.6: Consider hiring additional staff members to reduce the student-to-adult ratio during recess and breaks. This would also improve supervision during after-hour events. (F11.6)

This recommendation will not be implemented by TCSOS because it is not warranted and is not reasonable. TCSOS recognizes the importance of this recommendation, but TCSOS does not have statutory authority to require Summerville High School to consider hiring additional staff to reduce the student-to-adult ratio during recess and breaks. However, TCSOS will recommend that Summerville High School consider this recommendation as part of Summerville High School's development of its comprehensive school safety plan.

Recommendation R11.7: Create a formalized method for students to report safety concerns, such as a confidential online portal or designated staff members. This would ensure that all student concerns are properly documented and addressed. Additionally, consider the administration's suggestion of hiring more security guards and installing additional cameras to increase surveillance coverage. (F11.7)

This recommendation will not be implemented by TCSOS because it is not warranted and is not reasonable. TCSOS recognizes the importance of this recommendation, but TCSOS does not have statutory authority to require Summerville High School to create a formal method for students to report safety concerns or to consider hiring more security guards and installing additional cameras. However, TCSOS will recommend that Summerville High School consider this recommendation as part of Summerville High School's development of its comprehensive school safety plan.

XII. Twain Harte School

A. Responses to Findings

Finding F12.1: While ALICE training is a part of the yearly plan for Twain Harte School, it isn't clear if this occurred during the COVID years amidst school closures and times of uncertainty. The most recent drill was in January 2022 and an interviewee stated that the school was actively trying to schedule another drill for this calendar school year but was waiting on Sheriff availability. The ALICE training is listed in the school's safety plan.

TCSOS agrees with this finding.

Finding F12.2: The school is directly in town, making it appealing for members of the public to enter the grounds during school hours. In the field nearest the Twain Harte Market shopping center, a locked gate was recently installed, in an attempt to discourage foot traffic through the school grounds. When non-staff or non-students enter the premises there are staff who attempt to greet them and provide education on the availability of campus access.

TCSOS agrees with this finding.

Finding F12.3: While some of the buildings are older in nature, staff are working to update security measures to ensure that students are safe in the present day. Notably, there was a new locked gate installed along a back pathway into the primary school at the request and suggestion of teachers. Doors have devices to allow teachers to lock from the inside swiftly, and there has been fencing installed, where possible, but much of the school is open.

TCSOS agrees with this finding.

B. Responses to Recommendations

Recommendation R12.1: The district should ensure that the safety plan is updated routinely, and that all teachers, staff, students and parents are provided copies and pertinent training to develop current understanding. ALICE training should be yearly, and the Tuolumne County Sheriff's Office should prioritize and promote engagement with students and education around lockdowns and potential threats to the school. (F12.1)

This recommendation will not be implemented by TCSOS because it is not warranted and is not reasonable. TCSOS recognizes the importance of this recommendation, but TCSOS does not have statutory authority to require Twain Harte School to ensure it routinely updates its safety plan, to provide teachers, staff, students, and parents copies and training regarding the safety plan, and to conduct ALICE training yearly. However, TCSOS will recommend that Twain Harte School consider this recommendation as part of Twain Harte School's development of its comprehensive school safety plan.

Recommendation R12.2: Staff must continue to address fencing opportunities and find solutions to highly trafficked areas, during school hours. Dedicated

personnel for greeting on-campus visitors, or community members passing through would be ideal. (F12.2)

This recommendation will not be implemented by TCSOS because it is not warranted and is not reasonable. TCSOS recognizes the importance of this recommendation, but TCSOS does not have statutory authority to require Twain Harte School to have its staff continue to address fencing opportunities and find solutions regarding highly trafficked areas during school hours, including dedicated personnel to greet on campus visitors. However, TCSOS will recommend that Twain Harte School consider this recommendation as part of Twain Harte School's development of its comprehensive school safety plan.

Recommendation R12.3: Door locking devices work, but technology around this should be updated, making the locks stronger and more efficient. It is commendable that changes have been made at the request of the teachers, and this participation is critical to staff and students feeling heard, safe, and supported at school. (F12.3)

This recommendation will not be implemented by TCSOS because it is not warranted and is not reasonable. TCSOS recognizes the importance of this recommendation, but TCSOS does not have statutory authority to require Twain Harte School to update its door locking devices. However, TCSOS will recommend that Twain Harte School consider this recommendation as part of Twain Harte School's development of its comprehensive school safety plan.

XIII. Tuolumne County Law Enforcement and Superintendent of Schools Office

A. Response to Recommendation

Recommendation: The Grand Jury strongly recommends the establishment of a collaborative framework among local law enforcement, the Superintendent of Schools office, and all school districts in Tuolumne County to ensure the regular provision of ALICE (Alert, Lockdown, Inform, Counter, Evacuate) training. This training is vital in equipping students, staff, and the wider school community with the knowledge and skills necessary to respond effectively to emergency situations.

Given the critical nature of this training, it is suggested that this responsibility ultimately fall to the Superintendent of Schools office. As the central agency overseeing all school districts, the Superintendent's office is in the optimal position to take the lead to coordinate and ensure the consistent implementation of ALICE training across all schools in the county. In addition to ALICE training, it is suggested that the Tuolumne County Superintendent of Schools Office develop a compilation of each school's safety plan available to all substitutes. This centralization of responsibility would ensure a unified approach to safety measures, facilitating the standardization of safety procedures, and limiting errors or confusion.

To ensure the effectiveness and relevance of the training, it is recommended that the ALICE training be provided on an annual or bi-annual basis to staff and students. Regular training would help to keep the school community's knowledge and skills up-to-date and ensure that new staff and students are also adequately trained.

In developing and implementing the ALICE training, the Superintendent's office should work closely with local law enforcement. Their expertise and understanding of the local context would greatly enhance the relevance and effectiveness of the training. Law enforcement can also provide practical insights and guidance, making the training more realistic and hence more useful.

Finally, transparency and communication between these entities are paramount. The Superintendent of Schools office, law enforcement, and individual school districts should maintain open lines of communication to address any concerns, share best practices, and continuously improve the safety measures in place.

Implementing this recommendation would demonstrate a strong, united commitment to school safety, ensure that all students and staff in Tuolumne County are empowered with knowledge and skills necessary to keep themselves and others safe during emergencies.

This recommendation will not be implemented by TCSOS because it is not warranted and is not reasonable. TCSOS recognizes the importance of this recommendation, but TCSOS has already created a collaborative framework among law enforcement, the Superintendent of Schools office, and all school districts in Tuolumne County in 2023 which has focused on school safety. It is a collaborative group that respects the independence of each school district and their respective governing boards, that meet to have frank and open discussions around the topic of school safety. The group convenes to discuss best practices with regard to school safety, what is working well, and what could be improved. Although many schools in Tuolumne County use the ALICE system, none are required to specifically use that program. All schools in Tuolumne County have a response protocol for emergency situations.

Having a response protocol training is critical and TCSOS does many things to collaborate with and provide service to the school districts in the county; however, it is beyond the scope of TCSOS to implement and oversee ALICE training programs for all school districts. TCSOS does not have the statutory authority to direct or oversee the school districts as to ALICE training. Nor does TCSOS have the statutory authority to require that each district use the ALICE training program specifically. TCSOS does however take the lead to coordinate school safety collaboration and review school safety plans.

Further, substitute teachers are the employees of the districts in which they work and as such are not employed by TCSOS. The specific recommended training in the report for each district is beyond the scope of training that TCSOS is able to provide as each site has specific safety procedures unique to their locations.

Although TCSOS trains its staff in the ALICE system as most districts do, there are other reputable response training systems. Additionally, TCSOS has 3 ALICE trainers that can train staff and students in the ALICE system. These trainings are done in conjunction with local law enforcement. The local law enforcement agencies have a vested interest in school safety and spend effective time training school personnel and students. It is advisable that staff be trained at the beginning of the school year and students receive training during the school year. TCSOS can offer this training to the district personnel through the office but cannot force districts to do the training.

Open lines of communication between law enforcement, the Superintendent of Schools Office, and the school districts are maintained through monthly Ed. Law meetings, superintendent meetings, and semi-annual Safety Collaboration meetings. These meetings keep lines of communication open, communicate best practices, and ensure students and staff are empowered to keep themselves and others safe during emergencies.

To summarize, I look forward to continuing to provide school safety support for the school districts through this office in cooperation with law enforcement.

I wish to thank the Grand Jury for their hard work and dedication in fulfilling their mission of service to the Court and the citizens of Tuolumne County.

Sincerely,

*Zachary J. Abernathy
County Superintendent*