



Columbia Union School District

"Home of the 49ers"

SEP 01 2016

August 18, 2016

To the Honorable Judge Donald Segerstrom:

Superior Court of California
County of Tuolumne

The Columbia Union School District and Governing Board offers its sincere appreciation to the Grand Jury panel for their time and effort serving the citizens of Tuolumne County. Our district takes great pride in providing quality academic instruction for our students. Columbia has a longstanding tradition of excellence, high expectations, and exceptional programs. We take our role very seriously and appreciate the recommendations from the Grand Jury pertaining to district reorganization.

Upon reviewing the Grand Jury Report in its entirety, the district Governing Board and the Superintendent/Principal respectfully respond to each finding and recommendation as follows:

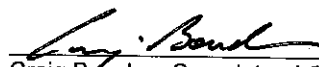
R1: The recommendation to join together to increase savings with vendors has largely been implemented. All of the districts in the county work cooperatively to receive lower pricing through Apple, Dell, Office Depot, Staples, Ricoh, and SYSCO, as well as having the ability to piggyback on pricing negotiated by the State. Columbia Union School District and many other districts in the county obtain health and welfare benefits through California's Valued Trust which is a consortium of California school employees. The Tuolumne County Superintendent of Schools Office negotiates yearly for propane pricing for all districts. There is no compelling evidence that district reorganization or unification would result in cost savings.

R2: The recommendation for an "independent and definitive study of the economic benefits and costs of school district reorganization" has been addressed many times. There have been numerous studies conducted in the county regarding unification or reorganization of districts, most recently in the year 2000. The funding incentive once offered by the California Department of Education to offset the cost of district reorganization no longer exists. With the new Local Control Funding Formula (LCFF) it is more beneficial for districts to remain separate. To conduct another formal study would be costly for the districts and there is no compelling need for another study.

It is our hope and desire that our collective effort be directed toward imploring the State of California to adequately fund our schools. For many years, public schools have withstood funding reductions which have placed California among the lowest per pupil funding in the nation. As a single school district, Columbia is able to commit every available dollar to employing outstanding educators and providing our students with a quality education. The Columbia Union School District Governing Board is committed to responsible financial stewardship and providing the best possible education for our students.

The district once again offers its appreciation to the Grand Jury for their work on this report. Please do not hesitate to contact me should you have additional questions or wish to discuss this any further.

Sincerely,

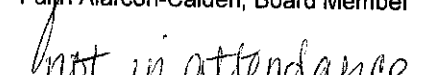

Craig Bowden, Superintendent/Principal


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Danese Pimentel, Board Member


Faith Alarcon-Calden, Board Member


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"Then and Now, Excellence Begins Here"