



Fallbrook Union High School District

2234 South Stage Coach Lane · Fallbrook, CA 92028
Phone (760) 723-6332 · Fax (760) 723-1795 · www.fuhisd.net

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SAN DIEGO
COUNTY GRAND JURY

July 22, 2013

Dale J. Mitchell, Ed.D.
Superintendent of Schools

Wilson H. Hatcher
Chief Business Officer

Honorable Robert J. Trentacosta
Presiding Judge of the San Diego Superior Court
220 West Broadway
San Diego, CA 92101

Board of Trustees

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Re: Review and Comments on San Diego County Grand Jury
2012/2013 Report
“School District Dilemma—Bonds or Bondage?”

Dear Judge Trentacosta:

We have reviewed the Facts, Findings and Recommendations in “School District Dilemma—Bonds or Bondage?” from the San Diego County Grand Jury 2012/2013 Final Report. We generally agree with the overall findings of the Grand Jury that includes greater citizen oversight of bond requirements and increased transparency of total bond costs and future outlays.

In the final report, the San Diego County Grand Jury recommends that the Fallbrook Union High School District do the following:

Recommendation 13-79:

“Structure future loans to offer more flexibility by allowing a variety of financing options to include:

- Limit the maturity of a bond to no more than 25 years
- Early prepayment of bonds
- A callable feature in all debt issuances
- No interest rates greater than 8%
- A debt ratio not to exceed 4 to 1
- Using the Education Code rather than Government Code.”

District Response:

The recommendation has not yet been implemented but some or all of the recommendations will be implemented in the future based on statutory requirements governing loans at the time

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they are initiated. At the time of this response, AB 182 is going thru the legislative process and contains many of the items specified in the report.

Recommendation 13-80:

“Hold public meetings to discuss the financial impact on the school district for all future bond proposals. The discussion should include:

- The bond amount
- Interest rate
- Terms
- Cost to homeowners in increased property taxes
- Total repayment amount
- What the new issue may do to future bond requirements.”

District Response:

The recommendation is reasonable and will be implemented subject to all statutory requirements governing bond proposals at the time they are initiated.

Recommendation 13-81:

“For all future bond proposals send public notices to all district residents to ensure that the community has adequate notice of school board meetings where bond proposals will be discussed. Meeting notices must be posted in several public locations (e.g., school bulletin boards, school websites, school offices, classrooms and district offices), as defined by the Brown Act.”

District Response:

The recommendation will not be implemented because it is not warranted and not reasonable. The cost to send public notices to all district residents of board meeting where bond proposals will be discussed is an additional expense taking resources from the instructional program that is unwarranted. The Brown Act already defines public notice requirements for all school board meetings including when bond proposals are being discussed. Meeting notices are posted in at the District office and required materials are posted on the district website. Copies are also available by request.

Recommendation 13-82:

“For all future bond proposals encourage the PTA or similar organizations to educate their membership in school board policies and procedures. Suggested featured speakers could be school or financial experts who can answer questions and share relevant bond information.”

District Response:

The recommendation is reasonable and will be implemented subject to all statutory requirements governing bond proposals at the time they are initiated.

On behalf of the Fallbrook Union High School District, we share your interest in ensuring that our community understands what is included in school bonds.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Dale J. Mitchell". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "Dale" and last name "Mitchell" clearly distinguishable.

Dale J. Mitchell, Ed.D.
Superintendent

cc: Laura Nicks