



## **LAKEPORT UNIFIED SCHOOL DISTRICT**

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Erin Smith-Hagberg, Superintendent

**To:** The Honorable Judge Stephen O. Hedstrom  
Presiding Judge  
Superior Court of Lake County

**From:** Lakeport Unified School District Governing Board

**RE:** Response to Grand Jury's Findings and Recommendations in the Final Report

**Date:** August 29, 2013

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### **GENERAL RESPONSE**

We commend the Public Services Committee of the Lake County Grand Jury on its report entitled "Financial and Educational Benefits to be derived from the Unification of Lake County School Districts".

#### **RESPONSE TO FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE LAKE COUNTY GRAND JURY IN ITS REPORT ENTITLED "FINANCIAL AND EDUCATIONAL BENEFITS TO BE DERIVED FROM THE UNIFICATION OF LAKE COUNTY SCHOOL DISTRICTS"**

##### **FINDING:**

F 1. Based on the totality of the facts above, consolidation/unification of the seven Lake County school districts into one would be beneficial both financially and educationally to Lake County Schools.

##### **RESPONSE:**

The Lakeport Unified Governing Board does not agree that consolidation/unification of the seven Lake County school districts into one would be beneficial both financially and educationally to Lake County schools.

In 2009, the County Board commissioned a study titled "Lake County School District Reorganization Feasibility Report", dated October 14, 2009. The study was the product of a task force and was reviewed in a public hearing. The conclusion of the study was that there remained several questions regarding the financial and educational benefits of such unification. The study reviews the changes in revenue allocation and anticipated expenses. The study indicates additional revenue would be available, but that could be offset by the adjustment of both the teacher and classified employment salary schedules in each of the seven different districts.

Unless another in-depth study is done by a professional agency knowledgeable of school finance and administration and provides evidence to the contrary, we are inclined to be guided by the "Lake County School District Reorganization Feasibility Report", dated October 14, 2009.

**FINDING:**

F 2. The PSC, guided by LCOE expenditure analysts, calculates that non-educational direct administration costs for the combined seven school districts amount to approximately \$10 million or approximately 15% of 2011-2012 Lake County total audited school expenditure of \$64,110.45. The potential savings may differ when the collateral costs of real estate, buildings and equipment are factored into the cost data. [See Appendix A]

**RESPONSE:**

The Lakeport Unified Governing Board disagrees with the finding. Although some economy of scale may be obtained, the number of district level-administrative staff needed to accomplish the required tasks in a district of 9000 students is significantly different than a district of 1500 students. Additionally, there are numerous Collective Bargaining Agreements that would need to be addressed.

Please note the following:

- Countywide unification would require establishing a countywide uniform salary schedule for all teachers in Lake County (EC 45028). Currently the largest numbers of teachers are employed by the Konocti Unified School District. There are a smaller number of teachers employed by certain smaller school districts at a higher pay rate than the Konocti Unified School District. The cost of salary increases for the teachers of all of the districts would need to be determined in order to determine the overall savings achieved by unification.

Also, please note the following:

- There are differences in the dollar amount paid toward employee health benefits in each of the school districts. The increased cost of providing health benefits for employees as a result of unification would need to be considered.
- There are differences in the dollar amount paid for classified salaries in each of the school district. The increased cost of salaries for classified employees as a result of unification would need to be considered.
- There are differences in the number of work days in each of the school districts. The increased cost of additional work days as a result of unification would need to be considered.

**FINDING:**

F 3. With the internet, instant communication links and two-way electronic access to each individual school in Lake County, LCOE administrative staff stated they can adequately and cost-effectively manage all of the Lake County's seven school district administrations.

**RESPONSE:**

The Lakeport Unified Governing Board does not have enough information as to the degree of management for which the Lake County Office of Education would be responsible, for us to be able to agree or disagree. Please note that the Lake County Office of Education stated they would need to hire additional staff. To do this could eliminate potential cost savings.

**FINDING:**

F 4. There will be additional costs involved with the unification/consolidation process and the revising/upgrading of various systems upon completion of consolidation. These costs are unknown at this time but they should not curtail the effort of consolidation/unification. The potential savings realized could be funneled back to improve the education of Lake County students.

**RESPONSE:**

The Lakeport Unified Governing Board believes that consolidation would be a costly endeavor and there is no data to confirm that consolidation/unification would benefit the education of Lake County students or save money.

**FINDING:**

F 5. Each of the seven Lake County school districts has their own unique identity and characteristics (sports and other competitive programs) which should remain unaffected by unification/consolidation. Students should not be required to relocate to different schools.

**RESPONSE:**

The Lakeport Unified Governing Board agrees with the finding.

**FINDING:**

F 6. After review of the LCBOE regular meeting minutes for the last twelve months, it appears that no business for the County Committee has been conducted and no petitions for reorganization have been received.

**RESPONSE:**

This finding is directed to the LCBOE, and does not require a response from the Lakeport Unified Governing Board.

**RECOMMENDATIONS**

**RECOMMENDATION:**

R 1. Residents of Lake County review the Lake County Civil Grand Jury's report in its entirety. (F1 - F6)

**RESPONSE:**

The Lakeport Unified Governing Board agrees with the recommendation.

**RECOMMENDATION:**

R 2. The Boards of Trustees for all school districts in Lake County consult with all school districts to identify opportunities for consolidation with a view to petitioning the County Superintendent of Schools pursuant to Education Code 35700. (F1 - F6)

**RESPONSE:**

The Lakeport Unified Governing Board is not interested in pursuing opportunities for consolidation at this time. The Lakeport Unified Governing Board cannot speak for other agencies.

**RECOMMENDATION:**

R 3. The Boards of Trustees for all Lake County school districts adopt and deliver to the CCSDO a resolution proposing consideration of consolidation all districts in Lake County, pursuant to Education Code Section 35721 (c). F1

**RESPONSE:**

The Lakeport Unified Governing Board is not interested in pursuing opportunities for consolidation at this time. The Lakeport Unified Governing Board cannot speak for other agencies.

**RECOMMENDATION:**

R 4. The County Committee on School District Organization (CCSDO) formulates plans for the consolidation of Lake County school districts pursuant to Education Code Section 35720.

**RESPONSE:**

This recommendation is directed to the LCBOE, and does not require a response from the Lakeport Unified Governing Board.

**RECOMMENDATION:**

R 5. The Lake County Board of Supervisors adopt and deliver to the CCSDO a resolution proposing consideration of consolidation of local school districts in Lake County, pursuant to Education Code 35721 (c). F1

**RESPONSE:**

This recommendation is directed to the Lake County Board of Supervisors, and does not require a response from the Lakeport Unified Governing Board

**RECOMMENDATION:**

R 6. The County Committee convenes one or more public hearings to gauge the electorate support for such unification/consolidation pursuant to Education Code Section 35700(a) and 35721 (a). (F1)

**RESPONSE:**

This recommendation is directed to the Lake County Board of Supervisors, and does not require a response from the Lakeport Unified Governing Board

**GRAND JURY REPORT  
“OVERSIGHT OF EDUCATION TRANSPORTATION IN LAKE COUNTY”**

**GENERAL RESPONSE**

We commend the Public Services Committee of the Lake County Grand Jury on its report entitled “Oversight of Education Transportation in Lake County”

**FINDING:**

F 1. The various transportation departments are doing an excellent job considering the budgetary constraints under which they operate.

**RESPONSE:**

The Lakeport Unified Governing Board has no information of transportation departments in other districts but believes that the LUSD Transportation Department is excellent.

**FINDING:**

F 2. Each district handles purchasing according to their own needs.

**RESPONSE:**

The Lakeport Unified Governing Board agrees with the finding.

**FINDING:**

F 3. The procedures are fairly uniform between districts.

**RESPONSE:**

The Lakeport Unified Governing Board has no information of purchasing procedures in other districts, thus we do not agree or disagree.

**FINDING:**

F 4. Administrative savings could be realized with centralized Information Technology for record keeping and purchasing. This could eliminate the teaching staff, principals, et al. from being responsible for transportation needs of the students (see "The Educational and Financial Benefits Derived from the Unification of all Lake County School Districts" in the 2012-2013 Civil Grand Jury Report).

**RESPONSE:**

The Lakeport Unified Governing Board has no data to confirm that centralized Information Technology would benefit the education of Lake County students or save money.

Teachers in our district have never been responsible for a student's transportation needs.

The district would welcome cost savings if a professional study could show that savings and quality of service can be maintained or improved.

**FINDING:**

F 5. The inclusion of GPS transponders allows for real-time location reporting which enhances student safety and security.

**RESPONSE:**

The Lakeport Unified Governing Board agrees with the finding. We currently use GPS technology to track the location and speed of our buses.

**FINDING:**

F 6. Middletown bus barn security is in need of repairs.

**RESPONSE:**

The Lakeport Unified Governing Board is unfamiliar with this situation and thus has no response.

**RECOMMENDATIONS**

**RECOMMENDATION:**

R 1. The transportation departments of all districts be commended for their performance under difficult circumstances. (F1)

**RESPONSE:**

The Lakeport Unified Governing Board has no information regarding transportation departments in other districts but believes that the LUSD Transportation Department is excellent.

**RECOMMENDATION:**

R 2. The committee recommends coordination of administration and IT into one office with one director. This can facilitate better contracts, inventory control and record keeping and governmental reporting. The IT system can further facilitate performance measurement of staff and facilities. This could eliminate the teaching staff, principals, et al from being responsible for transportation needs of the students. (F4)

**RESPONSE:**

The Lakeport Unified Governing Board has no data to confirm that centralized Information Technology would benefit the education of Lake County students or save money.

The district would welcome cost savings if a professional study could show that a savings and quality of service can be maintained or improved.

**RECOMMENDATION:**

R 3. All buses and white fleet in the county have GPS transponders installed. (F5)

**RESPONSE:**

The Lakeport Unified Governing Board agrees with the recommendation.

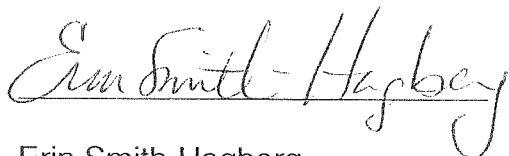
**RECOMMENDATION:**

R 4. The Middletown School District repair their security fence to control theft. (F6)

**RESPONSE:**

The Lakeport Unified Governing Board has no information that would allow us to agree or disagree with this recommendation.

Respectfully Submitted,



Erin Smith-Hagberg  
Superintendent