GARDEN GROVE UNIFIED SCHOOL DISTRICT

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August 28, 2007

Honorable Nancy Wieben Stock
Presiding Judge, Orange County Superior Court
700 Civic Center Drive West
Santa Ana, CA 92701

Dear Judge Nancy Wieben Stock:

In accordance with California Penal Code Section 933 and 933.05, responses are required from all Orange County public school districts to Finding F-1 and Recommendation R-1 of the Orange County Grand Jury report titled *"Orange County School Disaster Plans: A Disaster Waiting to Happen"*. Detailed below are the revised responses from the Garden Grove Unified School District.

Findings and Response

Finding F-1: *The overall quality of the 28 Orange County School Districts and their individual school's emergency preparedness plans are in need of much improvement.*

Response:

The Garden Grove Unified School District disagrees partially with Finding F-1 of the Orange County Grand Jury because it is in no position to assess the "overall quality" of emergency preparedness plans of the 28 Orange County school districts and their individual schools.

The Garden Grove Unified School District acknowledges the need to fortify the current district and school site emergency plans. As noted in the district's cover letter to the Grand Jury dated October 24, 2006, the District Emergency Management Plan is currently undergoing a comprehensive revision aligned with SEMS/NIMS standards. The second phase of this process includes the development of a SEMS/NIMS-compliant standardized model emergency plan for adoption by individual district schools. The newly revised district plan is projected for completion in the 2007-08 school year; and it is anticipated the model school plan will be implemented districtwide during the 2008-09 school year.

Developing comprehensive emergency management plans to ensure the safety of more than 52,000 students and employees at 73 sites is a time-consuming process fraught with complexities. It would greatly enhance the process if the Grand Jury would provide the benchmarks or matrix used in evaluating the plans submitted for review. The Grand Jury's generalized assessments of district and school emergency procedures were simply scored using one of three grades, and it failed to identify relative strengths or specific areas needing improvement for each plan. This information would be helpful to us.

Recommendation and Response

Recommendation R-1: *Orange County school districts should make sure that they and their individual schools have a SEMS equivalent plan, and these should be submitted to the Orange County Department of Education/Superintendent of Schools for review.*

Response:

The Garden Grove Unified School District disagrees with Recommendation R-1 of the Orange County Grand Jury.

As described in the response to Finding F-1 (previous page), the Garden Grove Unified School District is committed to revised emergency plans at the district and schools levels that are SIMS and NIMS compliant. The recommendation to submit any plans to the Orange County Department of Education will not be implemented because it is not warranted and, according to the OCDE, "is beyond the legal authority of the Orange County Superintendent of Schools." It is the responsibility of each school district to review their own "Comprehensive School Safety Plans" - of which the disaster/emergency plan is one required component - as stipulated by California Education Code Section 32281 and 32288.

Thank you for this opportunity to respond to the Grand Jury's report.

Sincerely,

Sue McCann, Ed.D.
Assistant Superintendent, Business Services

c: Orange County Grand Jury