



**Newport-Mesa**  
Unified School District

**BOARD OF EDUCATION**  
Carol Crane • Krista Weigand • Leah Ersoylu  
Michelle Barto • Michelle Murphy  
Lisa Pearson • Ashley Anderson

September 5, 2024

The Honorable Maria D. Hernandez  
Presiding Judge  
Orange County Superior Court  
700 Civic Center Drive West  
Santa Ana, CA 92701

Re: Newport-Mesa Unified School District's Response to the 2023-24 Orange County Grand Jury Report on *Use of Artificial Intelligence in Public Schools (K-12)*

To the Honorable Maria D. Hernandez:

The Newport-Mesa Unified School District (District) commends the Grand Jury for its time and attention devoted to studying this very important issue and publishing the Grand Jury Report dated June 12, 2024 entitled: *Use of Artificial Intelligence in Public Schools (K-12)* ("Report").

The District has thoroughly reviewed and considered the Findings and Recommendations in the Report. In accordance with California Penal Code sections 933 and 933.05, the Grand Jury has requested that the District respond to Findings and Recommendations made in the Report. The District responds to the Grand Jury's Findings and Recommendations with the following:

**Finding 1**

**Orange County's K-12 public schools have implemented policies and/or guidelines around the use of different AI platforms in varying and inconsistent ways. Some prohibit AI's use; others allow it; and some don't have policies or guidelines governing AI at all.**

The District agrees with the finding.

**Finding 2**

**Superintendents provide varying levels of support in implementing AI policies and/or guidelines in their respective school districts.**

The District agrees with this finding.

### Finding 3

**There are many resources to guide educators in using AI. Several are available at the local level through the Orange County Department of Education, Orange County Board of Education, CEO Leadership Alliance Orange County, and Orange Unified School District Technology Department, to name a few. However, utilization and even awareness of the availability of such resources is highly variable across school districts.**

The District agrees with this finding.

### Recommendation 1

**By June 30, 2025, Orange County's K-12 schools should implement policies and guidelines regarding the appropriate use of AI. These may be provided at the district level or within individual schools through the adoption of an Acceptable Use Policy, Code of Ethics, or other written directives addressing the use of AI.**

The District has not yet fully implemented this recommendation but will implement this recommendation by September 1, 2025, with the following action plan:

#### **Phase 1: AI Initiative Program Development and Review**

- **AI Workgroup Formation:** Assemble a diverse workgroup of teachers, students, parents, and administrators for input about implementation of AI use with teacher and student.
- **Draft Policy Review:** Review existing draft policies and guidelines to ensure they adequately address AI-related issues.
- **AI Language in Student Handbooks:** August 2024, AI-specific language has been added into all student handbooks to educate students about appropriate use of AI in regard to Academic Honesty.
- **Updated AUA Language:** Finalize updated language for staff and student Acceptable Use Agreements (AUA) that explicitly cover AI usage and have executive cabinet review/approve updates..

#### **Phase 2: Continue AI Implementation and Training**

- **Cross-Training:** Provide comprehensive cross-training for Teachers on Special Assignment (TOSAs) and coordinators, to integrate AI into all professional development topics.
- **Ongoing Training:** Provide ongoing training to keep staff and students updated on AI developments and best practices.

- **Collaboration with External Organizations:** Collaborate with OCDE, ISTE, and the district's think tank to develop a common language and approaches tailored to each district's specific needs.

### **Recommendation 2**

**Superintendents should ensure that their schools have policies that cover, at a minimum: the scope, guiding principles, and training regarding the responsible use of AI tools by students and teachers; any prohibited uses of special considerations regarding AI tools; and related security, privacy, and safety considerations.**

The District has not yet fully implemented this recommendation but will implement this recommendation by November 2025, with the following action plan: A draft policy is waiting for executive cabinet and board approval at this time. AI language has already been added to all student handbooks August, 2024 addressing code of ethics and appropriate use of AI in regard to academic honesty.

### **Recommendation 3**

**K-12 students should be trained on the appropriate use of AI.**

The District has begun implementing this recommendation as follows: NMUSD is committed to equipping students with the knowledge and skills necessary to navigate the AI-driven world.

- **Student-Centered AI Education:** Open forums and discussions will be held to engage students in understanding AI's potential benefits and risks.
- **Updated Student Handbooks:** Clear guidelines on AI usage and academic honesty have been incorporated into all student handbooks.
- **Student Leadership:** Selected students will serve as board members, advocating for responsible AI use and collaborating with the district's AI working group.
- **Integrated AI Literacy:** Digital citizenship lessons, with a focus on AI ethics and appropriate use, will be integrated into the curriculum.
- **Teacher Professional Development:** Educators receive training on AI tools, ethical implications, and effective strategies for incorporating AI into their teaching and as a model for students.
- **School AI Pilot:** NMUSD will pilot School AI, a moderated digital platform designed to provide students with a safe space to explore generative AI under teacher supervision.



#### **Recommendation 4**

##### **K-12 teachers should be trained on the appropriate use of AI.**

The District has implemented this recommendation as follows: NMUSD recognizes the transformative potential of AI in education and is committed to equipping teachers with the necessary knowledge and skills to effectively integrate AI into their classrooms. To achieve this, the district is implementing a comprehensive AI training program that focuses on:

- **Generative AI Understanding:** Teachers have and will continue to receive in-depth training on the capabilities, limitations, and ethical implications of generative AI tools.
- **Safe and Responsible AI Use:** Educators have and will continue to learn best practices for using AI tools in a manner that promotes student learning, privacy, and equity.
- **Addressing AI Biases:** Teachers have and will continue to be equipped to identify and mitigate potential biases in AI algorithms and data.
- **Student Proficiency:** The district aims to ensure that all students in grades 7-12 develop a foundational understanding of AI and become proficient users of AI technology.

#### **Recommendation 5**

##### **Schools and educators should be encouraged to collaborate with the various available AI consortiums and think tanks, such as OCDE and CLAOC, to effectively implement AI and establish basic tenets for its use.**

The recommendation has been implemented as follows:

NMUSD encourages schools and educators to collaborate with AI consortiums and think tanks like OCDE to explore innovative AI applications. To ensure alignment with district standards and safety protocols, NMUSD has established a curated list of approved AI tools. While teachers are welcome to learn from and participate in external AI initiatives, they are required to use only NMUSD-approved tools in their classrooms. This approach balances the benefits of collaboration with the need to maintain district oversight and data integrity.

Please accept the information provided herein as the District's responses to the Orange County Grand Jury's Factual Findings and Recommendation in the Report. Once again, we appreciate the time and attention that the Grand Jury devoted to this very important issue.

Sincerely,



Dr. Wesley Smith  
District Superintendent

The Honorable Maria D. Hernandez  
Presiding Judge, Orange County Superior Court  
Date  
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