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PRESS RELEASE

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2022-2023 SAN JOAQUIN CIVIL GRAND JURY RELEASES REPORT ON SCHOOL SAFETY IN SAN JOAQUIN COUNTY

Stockton, CA — Today, the 2022-2023 San Joaquin County Civil Grand Jury released its report investigating school safety in San Joaquin County. The Grand Jury cited recent events in San Joaquin County and elsewhere raised the question of whether the schools in the County were taking appropriate steps to protect students and staff.

Rather than focusing their investigation on one type of school safety threat, such as school shootings, or on school safety planning at one school or district in the County, the Grand Jury concluded it would best serve San Joaquin County citizens to review emergency preparedness planning for threats across the school safety continuum. The Grand Jury evaluated school safety planning from a layperson's perspective by measuring each district's preparedness against best practices as identified through research and expert testimony. The Grand Jury's report shares with the public the results of that evaluation.

In its investigation through multiple interviews, site visits, and expert witness testimony, the Grand Jury found while many protocols have been established in the County, there is no unified approach to school safety. Rather, safety planning often consists of a patchwork of policies and procedures and many of the Comprehensive School Safety Plans (CSSPs) required by law are boilerplate documents that are rarely specific to school sites. The Grand Jury reported schools in San Joaquin County are safer because of recent efforts by school districts, but more can be done. The Grand Jury's recommendations, include, but are not limited to:

- The San Joaquin County Office of Education and the San Joaquin County Office of Education Board of Trustees develop, adopt, and host an annual School Safety Summit.
- School districts create more opportunities for meaningful involvement by parents, students, and staff in safety planning efforts.
- Law enforcement must be more involved in the process of development, implementation, and annual updates of the CSSP, including participation in safety training/drills, building relationships with students and staff, and helping to create a culture of safety.
- Each school site's CSSPs account for dangers unique to the specific school site (e.g., train tracks, flooding, freeways).
- Safety drills should be conducted on different days throughout the school year and at various times throughout the school day.
- All school sites post flip charts or similar summaries of emergency procedures be posted in all classrooms and common areas.

The public is encouraged to read the complete report by visiting the Grand Jury's website.

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