



SANTA CRUZ  
COUNTY  
GRAND JURY

Grand Jury <grandjury@scgrandjury.org>

---

## Grand Jury Response

---

'Kris Munro' via Santa Cruz Grand Jury <grandjury@scgrandjury.org>

Mon, Aug 19, 2024 at 12:27  
PM

Reply-To: Kris Munro <kmunro@sccs.net>

To: Katherine.Hansen@santacruzcourt.org, grandjury@scgrandjury.org

Dear Honorable Judge Hansen and Members of the Grand Jury,

Thank you all for your service to our community. Please see my requested response to the Grand Jury's findings attached to this email.

Best regards,  
Kris

--

***Kris Munro***

Superintendent  
Santa Cruz City Schools  
133 Mission Street, Suite 100  
Santa Cruz, CA 95060  
831-429-3410 x220

***Engaging Students Hearts and Minds -- Every student, every day!***



**2024-9eI\_RapeData\_SantaCruzSS Invited Response Request.pdf**  
195K



The 2023–2024 Santa Cruz County Civil Grand Jury  
Invites the

**Superintendent, Santa Cruz City Schools**

to Respond by September 25, 2024

to the Findings and Recommendations listed below  
which were assigned to them in the report titled

**City Of Santa Cruz: Preventing Rape and Domestic  
Violence**

Where's The Priority?

Responses are **invited** from appointed agency and department heads, appointed committees, and non-profit agencies contracted to the county which are investigated by the Grand Jury. You are not required to respond by the California Penal Code [\(PC\) §933\(c\)](#).

If you choose to respond, please follow the instructions below when preparing your response.

## Instructions for Respondents

Your assigned [Findings](#) and [Recommendations](#) are listed on the following pages with check boxes and an expandable space for summaries, timeframes, and explanations. Please follow these instructions, which paraphrase [PC §933.05](#):

1. ***For the Findings, mark one of the following responses with an “X” and provide the required additional information:***
  - a. **AGREE with the Finding**, or
  - b. **PARTIALLY DISAGREE with the Finding** – specify the portion of the Finding that is disputed and include an explanation of the reasons why, or
  - c. **DISAGREE with the Finding** – provide an explanation of the reasons why.
  
2. ***For the Recommendations, mark one of the following actions with an “X” and provide the required additional information:***
  - a. **HAS BEEN IMPLEMENTED** – provide a summary of the action taken, or
  - b. **HAS NOT YET BEEN IMPLEMENTED BUT WILL BE IN THE FUTURE** – provide a timeframe or expected date for completion, or
  - c. **REQUIRES FURTHER ANALYSIS** – provide an explanation, scope, and parameters of an analysis to be completed within six months, or
  - d. **WILL NOT BE IMPLEMENTED** – provide an explanation of why it is not warranted or not reasonable.
  
3. ***When your responses are complete, please email your completed Response Request as a PDF file attachment to both***

The Honorable Katherine Hansen, Grand Jury Supervising Judge  
[Katherine.Hansen@santacruzcourt.org](mailto:Katherine.Hansen@santacruzcourt.org) and

The Santa Cruz County Grand Jury [grandjury@scgrandjury.org](mailto:grandjury@scgrandjury.org).

***If you have questions about this request form, please contact the Grand Jury by calling 831-454-2099 or by sending an email to [grandjury@scgrandjury.org](mailto:grandjury@scgrandjury.org).***

## Findings

**F4.** The loss of the in-person self-defense program for boys and girls in Santa Cruz City Schools lessens students' ability to prevent sexual assault and interpersonal violence, inconsistent with the mandate of Ordinance 81-29.

**AGREE**

**PARTIALLY DISAGREE**

**DISAGREE**

### Response explanation (required for a response other than **Agree**):

When the in-person self-defense program was provided by the City, school principals fielded complaints from staff about the programming. Middle and high school teachers and other staff stated that there was a disconnect between the staff who came to train students and the students themselves. It was reported that while the trainers had knowledge and skills in self-defense, their lack of formal training negatively impacted students gaining the desired skills. Efforts were made to mitigate these issues, but at the same time that the City was evaluating the program, the District came to the conclusion that these offerings should be suspended and instead implemented a broader curriculum.

The in-person self defense classes were only one part of a broader curriculum that the district uses to prevent sexual assault and interpersonal violence amongst our students. We have an articulated plan that utilizes credentialed science teachers, in-person speakers from Monarch Services, and interactive videos by Vector Solutions at every grade level and for every year from 6th to 12th grade.

Middle school science teachers have attended and have been trained by staff who are contracted through the Santa Cruz County Office of Education and other community partners including the Cardea Training, an organizational development and research firm, to teach age-appropriate Sex Education. There are many components to these 6th through 8th grade units that address topics such as awareness, healthy relationships, teen dating violence, sexual harassment, active consent, bystander intervention, and more. These trained professionals use creative techniques that include role playing, student team presentations, expert videos, guest speakers from partners such as the Walnut Avenue Family and Women's Resource Center, and more. The middle school science teachers meet and collaborate regularly to ensure clear grade level articulation and to share strategies. The entire Sexual Education Unit spreads across roughly one month of school each year.

In each SCCS high school, all students take a semester-long Health Education Class in 9th grade. In these classes, students are taught lessons similar to middle school, and the lessons evolve in complexity as students mature. These trained and credentialed Health teachers also use their expertise to engage students in thought provoking and critical thinking activities that connect to students' lives as they learn characteristics of healthy vs. unhealthy relationships. Teen dating violence, sexual harassment, human trafficking, and active consent are also covered.

Each year, from 10th through 12th grade, students are taught these essential skills. Our high schools partner with Monarch Services to educate students on topics such as dating and domestic violence, healthy relationships, active consent, power dynamics, social media safety, and more. The presenters from Monarch Services bring a wealth of expertise from their agency, and classroom teachers reinforce these lessons by facilitating discussions with students before and after the presentations.

This past year at Santa Cruz High, we piloted Vector Solutions for these lessons. The Vector courses are designed to be engaging and age-appropriate, featuring diverse peer presenters to help all students relate more easily to the content. The courses are customized for grades 6-8 and 9-12. Along with the videos, students took pre- and post-tests, which showed an increase in knowledge following the lessons. Topics for 10th through 12th graders included Dating Violence Awareness, Healthy Relationships, Resolving Disagreements, Stress and Anxiety, Youth Suicide Risk, and more.

In addition to our programming for grades 6-12, we also teach personal safety, boundaries, problem-solving, and conflict resolution to our elementary students using the evidence-based Second Step Social and Emotional Learning curriculum. Furthermore, we've partnered with Kidpower International to support our TK-5th grade students. Kidpower uses an 8-point boundary framework to help prevent and address issues quickly and effectively, including stopping unwanted touch and attention.

## Recommendations

**R3.** The Grand Jury recommends that the City Council begin evaluating options with the Santa Cruz City School District to reinstate the in-person self-defense program for middle and high school students of all genders by January 31, 2025. (F4)

**HAS BEEN IMPLEMENTED** – summarize what has been done

**HAS NOT YET BEEN IMPLEMENTED BUT WILL BE IN THE FUTURE** – summarize what will be done and the timeframe

**REQUIRES FURTHER ANALYSIS** – explain the scope and timeframe (not to exceed six months)

**WILL NOT BE IMPLEMENTED** – explain why

### Required response explanation, summary, and timeframe:

As addressed in our response to Finding #4, the Grand Jury appears to be unaware of the comprehensive programs and activities currently implemented by the Santa Cruz City School District for preventing sexual assault, interpersonal violence, and promoting personal safety. Our present curriculum and systems offer a significantly broader and more in-depth safety education compared to the in-person program previously provided in partnership with the Commission for the Prevention of Violence Against Women (CPVAW). The former program did not adequately equip students with the necessary skills to navigate the complexities of domestic violence and sexual assault.

Since then, our programs have evolved substantially. The advancements in data, technology, and educational techniques over the past several years have enabled us to develop a more relevant and effective approach to safety education. Unlike traditional self-defense courses that primarily focus on physical defense, our current programs emphasize the importance of understanding healthy relationships, addressing teen dating violence, and recognizing active consent. These areas are crucial, given that, according to the National Sexual Violence Resource Center, in eight out of ten rape cases, the victim knows the perpetrator. Our programs, including Vector, which was funded by CPVAW in 2024, are designed to address these crucial aspects.

It is regrettable that the Grand Jury did not consult the Santa Cruz City School District to gain a full understanding of our current curriculum before making its assessment and recommendations. We take great pride in our comprehensive programming, which spans all grade levels and focuses on personal safety and prevention of sexual harassment, sexual assault, and interpersonal violence. We continuously review and refine our safety and prevention programs, lessons, and partnerships to enhance student engagement and learning outcomes. We appreciate the ongoing support of CPVAW for the programs we have in place and look forward to continuing our collaborative efforts.