

**POPE VALLEY UNION  
ELEMENTARY SCHOOL  
DISTRICT**

**Final Report**

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**NAPA COUNTY GRAND JURY**  
**P.O. BOX 5397**  
**NAPA, CALIFORNIA 94581**

A Tradition of Stewardship  
A Commitment to Service

April 7, 2009

The Honorable Raymond A. Guadagni  
Presiding Judge  
Superior Court of the State of California  
County of Napa  
825 Brown Street  
Napa, CA 94559

Dear Judge Guadagni,

Pursuant to Section 933(a) of the California Penal Code, the 2008-2009 Napa County Grand Jury submits to you its Final Report on the Pope Valley Union Elementary School District. Our investigation of this subject was conducted in a manner consistent with the California Penal Code, this Court's Charge, and the historic role of the Grand Jury – to protect the interests of the citizens of Napa County.

This is the seventh in a series of final reports we will be issuing before our term ends. I would like to acknowledge the hard work and dedication of the Grand Jury which our report reflects. It is a privilege and a pleasure to work with them.

Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "W. Trautman".

William E. Trautman  
Foreperson  
2008-2009 Napa County Grand Jury



A Tradition of Stewardship  
A Commitment to Service

## NAPA COUNTY GRAND JURY

P.O. BOX 5397

NAPA, CALIFORNIA 94581

To the Citizens of Napa County:

The 2008-2009 Napa County Grand Jury, which is charged with the duty of providing residents of Napa County with investigating and reporting on governmental agencies and districts within the Cities and County, conducted an investigation of the Pope Valley Union Elementary School District (PVUESD). The School District was last investigated by the Grand Jury in 1999-2000.

PVUESD provides an academically excellent program, taught by a caring, progressive faculty within an atmosphere of warmth, mutual respect and high expectations. Employees of PVUESD multi-task and maximize assets in a small community with few resources.

PVUESD is the first school district in Northern California to purchase "green" propane buses. The new, larger buses will necessitate a new, larger bus barn. The District also plans to replace the present propane tank with a larger one.

Morale among the teachers and classified staff is good, and the teachers enjoy providing the students an education in a family/community environment with particular attention to individual needs. One teacher was quoted as saying "teaching in Pope Valley is teacher heaven."

Each student in grades 5<sup>th</sup> through 8<sup>th</sup> receives a Dell laptop computer to use throughout the academic year. Federal funding received in 2005, provides wireless access which connects PVES with the Napa Valley Unified School District (NVUSD). The laptops are programmed with Achieve 3000™ web-based learning software that focuses on reading comprehension at individualized student levels.

The classrooms have safety blinds on the windows; however PVES does not have "Columbine" type locks installed on classroom doors.

The PVUSD Board is commended for providing each student, grades 5<sup>th</sup> through 8<sup>th</sup>, with a laptop in order to facilitate differentiated learning. The teachers are commended for their dedication and professionalism. The District is also commended for purchasing an environmentally friendly school bus fleet. The SSC and the PVSPG are commended for providing funding for many "extras" for the students including the annual field trip to Yosemite for 6<sup>th</sup> through 8<sup>th</sup> grade students, and after school programs in sports and the arts.

Respectfully submitted,

The 2008-2009 Napa County Grand Jury

# POPE VALLEY UNION ELEMENTARY SCHOOL DISTRICT

## SUMMARY

The 2008-2009 Napa County Grand Jury, which is charged with the duty of providing residents of Napa County with investigating and reporting on governmental agencies and districts within the Cities and County, conducted an investigation of the Pope Valley Union Elementary School District (PVUESD). The School District was last investigated by the Grand Jury in 1999-2000.

PVUESD provides an academically excellent program, taught by a caring, progressive faculty within an atmosphere of warmth, mutual respect and high expectations. Employees of PVUESD multi-task and maximize assets in a small community with few resources.

The Pope Valley Elementary School (PVES) campus does not have a multi-purpose room large enough for the entire school population, which could serve as a place for after school activities and use by the community. In addition, it could serve as a much needed cafeteria, with an adjacent kitchen for food storage and preparation. Most days the entire school population eats outside under a covered patio at picnic tables. The present multi-purpose room in a portable classroom will only seat half the students at a time. Eating indoors during very hot, inclement or frigid weather is not an option.

PVUESD is the first school district in Northern California to purchase “green” propane buses. The new, larger buses will necessitate a new, larger bus barn. The District also plans to replace the present propane tank with a larger one.

PVUESD is classified as a “Basic Aid” District, thereby receiving money generated from local property taxes, and not a set amount from the State of California. Property taxes account for approximately 73 percent of the District’s revenue. The District also receives funding from grants, class-size reduction, Title I and II monies, and small school grants. There is a designated reserve to cover the projected cost of special education. The reserve can be used for other purposes as well and is substantially higher than the State recommended level of \$53,000. Given our present economy, PVUESD needs to be aware that property taxes may level out, or decrease over the next few years, negatively impacting the reserve.

Morale among the teachers and classified staff is good, and the teachers enjoy providing the students an education in a family/community environment with particular attention to individual needs. One teacher was quoted as saying “teaching in Pope Valley is teacher heaven.”

Each student in grades 5<sup>th</sup> through 8<sup>th</sup> receives a Dell laptop computer to use throughout the academic year. Federal funding received in 2005, provides wireless access which connects PVES with the Napa Valley Unified School District (NVUSD). The laptops are programmed with Achieve 3000™ web-based learning software that focuses on reading comprehension at individualized student levels.

When asked by the Grand Jury, “How safe is the school?” the immediate response was “from wild-animals or humans?” Rattlesnakes, mountain lions and bears are more of a “safety” concern, according to those interviewed. Although the campus has been violence-free for many years, the Grand Jury has concerns regarding safety and security on the campus. The classrooms have safety blinds on the windows; however PVES does not have “Columbine” type locks installed on classroom doors. PVES is a closed campus; the public has free access to the grounds during school hours. There is a sign at the front entrance requesting all visitors sign in at the office and receive a visitor pass.

Students are provided minimal substance abuse and drug education via Drug Abuse Resistance Education (D.A.R.E.). This program teaches students good decision making skills to help them avoid high-risk behaviors. The PVUESD faculty, staff and trustees are of one-mind; they believe their campus is not at-risk regarding drugs, gangs and/or safety.

The 7<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> grade students receive training in Community Emergency Response. The CATALYST Coalition Coordinator at Napa County Office of Education (NCOE) teaches the class. The same students, as well as the entire PVES faculty/staff, are certified in First Aid and CPR.

## **BACKGROUND**

The PVUESD is a small, rural school district located in Napa County between the eastern mountains of Napa Valley and Lake Berryessa. In many ways the area is a throw-back into another era, a community where neighbors know each other, pull together for the good of the whole regarding fire protection, or a benefit fundraiser for their school. This is not to say the school is behind the times, in fact, quite the opposite. PVUESD is a district that maximizes assets in a small rural community with few resources.

The PVUESD occupies one campus that is an elementary/middle school serving K through 8<sup>th</sup> grade students. Founded in the 1800’s, the School District originally was a union of five schoolhouses spread throughout the area. One original one-room schoolhouse still exists near the town of Pope Valley. As the area demographics changed, there was a need for one centralized campus and hence the name “Pope Valley *Union* Elementary School District.”

# METHODOLOGY

Over a period of several months, the 2008-2009 Grand Jury conducted an investigation of the PVUESD. The Grand Jury toured the campus and met with District representatives.

## Documents and Websites Reviewed

- Pope Valley Union School District Mission Statement
- Pope Valley Union School District Final Budget, 2005-2006
- Pope Valley Union School District Budget, 2007-2008
- Pope Valley Union School District Budget, 2008-2009
- Pope Valley Union School District Annual Financial Audit Report – Goodell, Porter and Fredericks, June 30, 2005
- Pope Valley Union School District Annual Financial Audit Report – Goodell, Porter and Fredericks, June 30, 2006
- Pope Valley Union School District Annual Financial Audit – Goodell, Porter and Fredericks, June 30, 2007
- Pope Valley Union School District Annual Financial Audit—Goodell, Porter and Fredericks, June 30, 2008
- Pope Valley Union School District First Interim Financial Report, 2008-2009
- Pope Valley Union Elementary School District, Superintendent/Principal Contract
- Organization Chart for Pope Valley School
- Contact Information, Staff and Board of Pope Valley Union School District
- Pope Valley Union Elementary School, Certified Salary Schedule
- Pope Valley Union Elementary School District Classified Salary Schedules, 2007/2008
- Napa County Fire Department, Fire Marshal’s Office, Fire and Safety Compliance Order, 09/12/05
- Napa County Fire Department, Fire Marshal’s Office, Fire and Safety Compliance Order, 03/13/07
- Pope Valley Union Elementary School District, Suspension Notices to Parents/Guardians Reports for 2007, 2008, (3)
- Pope Valley Union Elementary School District Policies
  - Philosophy-Goals-Objectives & Comprehensive Plans (series 0000)
  - Community Relations (series 1000)
  - Administration (series 2000)
  - Business & Non-instructional Operations (series 3000)
  - Personnel (series 4000)
  - Students (series 5000)
  - Instruction (series 6000)
- ADA Inspection Reports
- Emergency Operation Plan for Pope Valley Union School District, Incident Commander Manual
- NCOE – Pope Valley Accounts Receivable Reports for 2006-2007
- NCOE – Pope Valley Accounts Receivable Reports for 2005-2006

- NCOE Teacher and Community Resource Guide, 2008-2009
- “Propane-powered bus a Pope Valley school Green idea,” *Napa Valley Register*, January 29, 2008
- “In school funding beef, law is not on St. Helena’s side,” *Napa Valley Register*, Letters to the Editor, by Barbara Nemko, November 17, 2008
- Pope Valley Pioneers Student Handbook, 2008-09, working document
- Napa County Fire Department, Fire Marshall’s Office, Fire and Life Safety Compliance Order, 10/4/06
- Napa County Fire Department, Fire Marshall’s Office, Fire and Life Safety Compliance Order, 5/2/07
- Napa County Fire Department, Fire Marshall’s Office, Fire and Life Safety Compliance Order, 11/3/08
- Pope Valley Union School District, Management’s Discussion and Analysis (Financial Analysis of the Government-wide Statements), June 30, 2007
- [www.popevalley.k12.ca.us](http://www.popevalley.k12.ca.us), school website
- [www.cde.ca.gov](http://www.cde.ca.gov), California School Directory, District: Pope Valley Union Elementary
- [www.cde.ca.gov](http://www.cde.ca.gov), Local Educational Agency (LEA) List of Schools, 2008 Growth Academic Performance Index Report, Pope Valley Union Elementary
- [www.cde.ca.gov](http://www.cde.ca.gov), California Standardized Testing and Reporting (STAR), Pope Valley Union Elementary
- [www.cde.ca.gov](http://www.cde.ca.gov), Pope Valley Union Elementary Expulsion, Suspension, and Truancy Information for 2007-2008
- [www.localschooldirectory.com](http://www.localschooldirectory.com), Pope Valley Elementary School
- <http://webschoolpro.com/CA28662826027015/accountability.html>
- <http://webschoolpro.com/CA28662826027015/ayp.html>
- <http://webschoolpro.com/CA28662826027015/page99.html>
- <http://webschoolpro.com/CA28662826027015/star.html>
- <http://www.popevalley.k12.napa.ca.us/School%20Accountability%20Report%20Card.htm>
- [swrcb2.waterboards.ca.gov/ewrims/wrims-data/1011413%20a023696.pdf](http://swrcb2.waterboards.ca.gov/ewrims/wrims-data/1011413%20a023696.pdf)

## Interviews Conducted

- Members and representatives of the PVUESD

## Facilities Inspected

- PVES campus
- Volunteer Free/Reduced Lunch preparer’s kitchen



## DISCUSSION

The mission of the PVUESD is to:

*“maintain a safe school in a beautiful, natural environment, to develop and enrich the life of each child to his or her maximum potential, both intellectually and socially, through an academically excellent program that is taught by caring, progressive staff in an atmosphere of warmth, mutual respect and high expectations.”*

### Facilities

PVES is situated in a rural location off the county road. A small, old bus barn sits adjacent to the parking lot. The playground has backstops for softball, an area large enough for soccer, and play equipment for climbing. The school grounds are completely enclosed by chain-link fencing, with a gate at the entrance.

Water, or the lack of it, is an issue in Pope Valley. The water supply for the school consists of a reservoir with water collected during the winter from a nearby creek as per:

*State Water Resources Control Board (SWRCB), permit #16221, license 11413, issued August 22, 2000, that supersedes the license originally issued on 01/26/1984.*

The water is collected from Burton Creek and may not exceed 5,400 gallons per day, or 2.6 acre-feet per year. The reservoir is fenced, however it poses as an “attractive nuisance.” The water system is old and many of the parts are non-replaceable. The District has a back-up plan/system of trucking-in water to a plastic holding tank. Water quality is monitored by the private firm of Brelje and Race.

The school is comprised of three buildings that are clean and well maintained. The oldest of the present buildings was built in 1969, and houses the Superintendent/ Principal’s office, the Resource Teacher’s room, the library and the computer lab. A newer building completed in 1982, includes three classrooms, the office, staff room and a First Aid room. A new portable classroom is used as a multi-purpose room. The buildings are in good repair and the classrooms adequate in size. The rooms display active and participatory learning centers, as well as quiet places to study. The classrooms are well lighted with a bank of windows that face the playground.



The five restrooms are clean and in good repair. A new heat reflective or “cool” roof was recently installed to more efficiently deal with the hot temperatures experienced during the late spring to early fall months.

There is no cafeteria/kitchen or multi-purpose room with a capacity to handle the entire student population. An outdoor, partially covered area on the blacktop serves as the student lunch area with picnic tables and benches. A bus barn houses two school buses that transport nearly all the students.

The campus is compliant with American Disabilities Act of 1990 (ADA) and has a parking area for disabled children, ramps to the portable classrooms, and a handicapped bathroom. The campus is also compliant with fire/safety codes and was last inspected by the Napa County Fire Department (NCFD) Fire Marshall’s Office on 11/03/08.

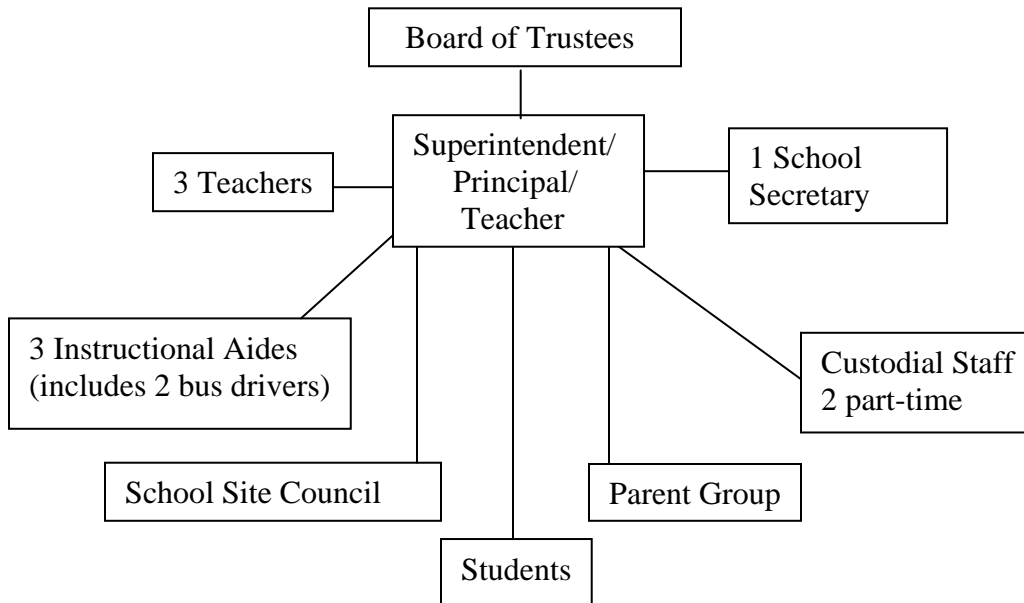
## Demographics

Currently PVES serves seventy-nine students with an ethnic distribution of approximately 40 percent Hispanic, 60 percent Caucasian. Gender breakdown is 60 percent female to 40 percent male. The percentage of Socio-economically Disadvantaged students is 22 percent; English Language Learners (ELL) 22 percent; and Students with Disabilities 23 percent. At the time of the investigation, there were fourteen students in the combined class of Kindergarten - 1; eighteen students in grades 2 - 3; fifteen students in grades 3 - 4; seventeen students in grades 5 - 6; and there are fifteen students in the 7<sup>th</sup> - 8<sup>th</sup> grades. The teacher/student ratio is 1:19.

## School Schedules

The PVUESD academic year contains 180 student days, with a three week winter break and a one week spring break. Holidays and minimum schools days are listed in the PVUESD calendar on the District website. The Grand Jury understands that during the course of this investigation a student handbook was drafted and will be available for publication next school year. This information is customarily given to students and parents at the beginning of each academic year in the form of a student handbook.

## Organizational Chart for Pope Valley Union Elementary School District



### School Administration

The PVUESD Superintendent serves as the principal of PVES, and this year also teaches the 7<sup>th</sup> - 8<sup>th</sup> grade class.

### Finances

The District is classified as a “Basic Aid District,” thereby receiving money generated from local property taxes, and not a set amount from the State of California. The District also receives categorical funding from grants, class-size reduction, Title I and II, and small school grants.

The Grand Jury reviewed the District’s financial condition over the past five years. By looking at past years’ data along with the most recent year’s results, the Grand Jury was able to analyze the District’s financial trends. In light of the current real estate market and the significant role property taxes play in school financing, some of the past trends may not be a predictor of the future. However, through June 30, 2008, the financial trends for the District were very positive.

Property Tax Revenue account for approximately 73 percent of revenue of the District. Between 2005 and 2007, revenue has increased from \$672,062 to \$977,508; and in 2008 to \$1,169,290. Expenses in the same time period have gone from \$738,049 to \$956,260 and in 2008 to \$1,068,256.

The 2008-09 budget projects revenue both restricted and unrestricted at \$1,169,290, down from \$1,129,040 in 2007-08. Expenses both restricted and unrestricted are projected at \$1,031,281, down from \$1,068,256 in 2007-08.

The increase or decrease in the District's net assets over time is one indication of whether its financial health is improving or deteriorating. As reflected in the Appendix, the District's net asset position increased a projected \$101,034 in the current fiscal year, primarily due to increases in property taxes. The increase in property taxes 2006-07 to 2007-08 was \$170,904 or 25 percent compared with an increase of \$108,729 or 19 percent between 2005-06 and 2006-07. But as property within the District is reassessed downward, the District cannot expect to see these percentage increases continue. One source projects there may not be any increases in property taxes over the next few years.

On the expense side of the financial statement, the District expenses continue to increase each year. The District's expenses for instruction and pupil services represented 71 percent of total expenses in the June 30, 2008, fiscal year. The remaining expenses were administrative, physical plant services and other expenses. As revenues decrease and expenditures increase, the gap narrows and the use of reserves becomes more probable without a cut in services, most of which is instruction. The District currently has a healthy reserve of \$352,019, which is substantially higher than the State recommended level of \$53,000. This is an increase of \$136,000 since 2005-06. Please refer to the Appendix for more detailed budget information.

The District staff recommended the Board of Trustees approve a "positive" certification, which states the District will be able to meet its financial obligations for the remainder of the 2008-09 fiscal year and two subsequent fiscal years. But careful financial planning will be necessary over these years as property tax revenues begin to subside.

The District works closely with a Financial Advisor at the NCOE. All financial transactions, staff payroll, and accounts payable are checked by a NCOE Financial Advisor/Clerk. Two signatures are required on the Revolving Cash Fund.

#### Other Funding

An official PTA does not exist at PVES, instead there is a parent organization known as the Pope Valley School Parent Group (PVSPG). There are no "booster clubs." The PVSPG is a nonprofit group of parents and guardians of children in the PVUESD. The goals of the Group are to enhance and support education at the school, raise funds for different projects, and volunteer in the classroom and for numerous events. The Group meets monthly during the academic year.

According to the PVSPG By-laws, drafted in February 1996, funds raised are to be kept in a free checking account at a local bank. The treasurer is responsible for deposits, writing checks, paying bills and giving monthly reports at the meetings. Members vote on disbursements of funds. A majority of the governing board and members must approve any expenditure. Income sources include bingo, candy sales, poinsettia sales, cookie dough sales, e-script, and the sale of refreshments at the fair. In the past, a Memorial Day picnic and an annual Turkey Shoot contributed substantial support for after school programs. It was hoped a golf course (Lake Luciana Golf Course) along the northern edge of Weeks Lake in Pope Valley on land once known as Juliana Vineyards would provide financial support in the future. However, with the recent decision at The

Napa County Conservation, Development and Planning Commission to not grant approval of this development project, this does not appear to be possible.

## School Site Council

The School Site Council (SSC) consists of a group of teachers, parents, classified employees and the Superintendent/Principal. The SSC works with the Superintendent/Principal to develop, review and evaluate school improvement programs, school budgets and safety plans, discipline and parent participation. The members of the SSC are generally elected by their peers (parents elect the parent representatives and teachers elect teachers). However in Pope Valley with its small population, the SSC consists of those willing to volunteer.

The PVES - SSC works with and advises the Superintendent/Principal on how certain State and Federal funds should be spent, and oversees the expenditure of some PVSPG funding.

State and Federal funds under the purview of the SSC include: Unrestricted and Restricted State Lottery, Art & Music Block Grant, The Arts, Music & PE Grant, Transportation Home, District Discretionary Block Grant, Safe & Drug Free Schools, NCLB Title I Part A, Title V Innovative Education Program, Title II Part D Enhancement Fund.

The SSC provides support for or oversees funding for:

- Sports equipment, playground equipment, swings
- Hot meal for entire school once a month
- Field trips – 6<sup>th</sup> through 8<sup>th</sup> grade students to Yosemite each year
- End of year pool party
- Childcare after school from 4:00 - 4:45 p.m.
- Daily free brown bag lunches for those who would qualify under the National School Lunch Program and the milk purchased from Clover-Lake County
- After school programs: sports, visual art, chorus, drama, dance, homework club and an adult English class

### School Lunch

PVES is a small school with forty-two families. As noted in the Facilities section of this report, there is no cafeteria or kitchen on campus and therefore the school does not provide hot lunches to students. However, the entire school is treated to a hot meal once a month provided by the SSC and the PVSPG. This usually is a BBQ, or a holiday oriented meal, for example a Thanksgiving feast or spring picnic, with parents providing the food and preparation. The PVUSD does not participate in the National School Lunch Program (NSLP) because they do not have a cafeteria with a kitchen, although 33 percent of the student population qualifies for the federally funded Free Lunch Program.

Most days, students eat at picnic tables outside under an overhang on the blacktop. It should be noted the campus has experienced extreme weather ranging from 120 degrees

to frigid temperatures and snow during the past academic year. A new portable classroom serves as the indoor area where half the student body can eat their bag lunches during rain, snow, wind, extremely hot weather or to escape the yellow jackets and rattlesnakes. The portable also serves as the area for after-school/art and rainy day activities.

## Faculty

The PVES Faculty consists of four credentialed teachers. One of the teachers and the Superintendent/Principal has a Masters Degree in School Administration, and one member of the staff has a Bilingual/Cross-Cultural Credential; other teachers have Cross-cultural Language Academic Development (CLAD) certifications.

Staff turnover is almost non-existent. One of the teachers has taught at PVES for thirty-three years, and another considers teaching at PVES as “teacher heaven.” Morale among the teachers and classified staff is good and they enjoy providing the students “an education in a family/community environment with an attention to individual” student needs.

## Computers

Each student from grades 5 through 8 receives a Dell laptop computer, which is returned at the end of the school year. The laptops are funded by the School Board and are programmed with a censor device provided by NCOE. They are programmed with Achieve 3000™ web-based learning software that focuses on reading comprehension. With this software each student has the same reading assignment yet receives the assignment tailored to his/her reading level. PVES received Federal funding in 2005, so they could provide wireless access. A T1 line (fiber optic) connects PVES with the NVUSD.

## Gifted and Talented Education Program (GATE)

GATE is:

*authorized by Education Code (EC) sections 52200-52212 (Outside Source), provides funding for local educational agencies (LEAs) to develop unique education opportunities for high and under-achieving pupils in California public elementary and secondary schools who have been identified as gifted and talented. Special efforts are made to ensure that pupils from economically disadvantaged and varying cultural backgrounds are provided with full participation in these unique opportunities.*

PVES has eleven students in the GATE program, representing approximately 20 percent of the eligible students (grades 2 through 8) in the school. Five of the GATE students are ELL and for six students the primary language is English.

## Testing

In accordance with the California Public Schools Accountability Act of 1999, the California Department of Education implements standardized tests to ensure compliance with curriculum guidelines. This program also measures the academic progress in public schools. There are three areas under this standardized testing. California Progress Reporting (APR) is:

*...an integrated accountability system that reports both the state Academic Performance Index (API) and the federal Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP) and Program Improvement (PI). The API is measured against the APIs of 100 other schools with similar demographic characteristics.*

PVES demographics are unique; there are no similar school reports available by which to measure the school's progress. According to the California Department of Education report, PVES overall met 2008 API Criteria. Standardized Testing and Reporting (STAR) report confirms test score results for PVES are "always in the high 700s or in the 800's (200 being extremely poor and in need of improvement and 800-1,000 being outstanding)." The Performance Index (PI) in 2008, made adequate progress. It is noted in the School Accountability Report Card published by the State of California, "Scores are not shown when the number of students tested is 10 or less, either because the number of students in this category is too small for statistical accuracy, or to protect student privacy." The AYP is a statewide mandated system by the No Child Left Behind Act of 2001, ensuring all schools and districts make adequate progress when educating their students. PVES meets these requirements.

## Student Health and Welfare

### School Psychologist

PVUESD shares a school psychologist with the Howell Mountain Elementary School District (HMESD), on an as needed basis.

### Special Education

Special Education provides individually planned and systematically monitored educational instruction for students with disabilities or behavioral problems. The program uses adaptive equipment and materials designed to help learners with special needs achieve a higher level of personal self-sufficiency and success in school than is normally available in a typical classroom.

Two years ago, the HMESD took over the Special Education Program, which previously was provided either by the NCOE and/or the Up-Valley consortium consisting of St. Helena Unified School District (SHUSD), Calistoga Joint Unified School District (CJUSD), and the HMESD.

Through a Memorandum of Understanding between PVUSD and HMESD, the HMESD now provides and oversees the Special Education Program for both Districts. Special Education staff includes a part-time aide that is shared with the HMESD.

### School Nurse

Napa County Schools do not have access to regular visits from a school nurse. PVUESD works with HMESD to provide some health testing/screening. All of the teachers and the secretary are trained in the use of Epi-pens, CPR and First Aid. The school has a designated “sick room.”

### Student Safety/Campus Security

Not all classrooms have a phone; however teachers carry walkie-talkies for communication purposes. Blinds have been installed on all classroom windows to prevent anyone on the outside from seeing into the rooms in an emergency or terrorist incident. There are no “Columbine” type locks installed on any classroom door. The “Columbine” lock is a type of lock given this name after the violent incident at Columbine High School in Colorado. That incident demonstrated it can be dangerous to go outside a classroom to lock the door. The “Columbine” lock allows doors to be locked easily from the inside.

The PVES is a closed campus. Parental permission is required to leave the campus. Visitors are required to check in at the main office to receive a visitor pass. However, this rule is frequently breached as Pope Valley is a small community and it is accepted that “everyone seems to know or is friends with everybody and it is not necessary.”

The Pope Valley Volunteer Fire Department is one-half mile away should an urgent situation arise with an estimated response time of seven minutes. Rattlesnakes, mountain lions and bears are more of a “safety” concern of the faculty and administration than other factors.

### Transportation

When a student qualifies for the free lunch program they also qualify for free school bus transportation. PVUESD operates two school buses, with one route to the north and one route to the south of the school. The school buses currently in operation were purchased in the early 1980’s and are in need of replacement. The District is in the process of purchasing a new “green” propane-fueled school bus using a State grant that helps small rural school districts to replace older buses. This bus will be the first “green” school bus in northern California and it will have seat belts for the students. The District is considering the purchase of a second propane bus through a grant from the Bay Area Air Quality Management District.

The new forty-seven seat bus cost \$120,000 and is partly financed through a \$63,000 grant from the California Department of Education designed to reduce reliance on school buses that do not meet modern safety standards.

The school, which uses propane for heating and power, should see a cost savings because it would only need a larger propane tank to be able to refuel the new bus on campus as opposed to driving to St. Helena or Middletown. When the new school bus arrives later this year, the PVUSD will have to build a new bus barn as the current one will not accommodate the larger, new buses.





The old bus barn

## District Disaster Plan

The PVUESD staff and administration have participated in the Standard Emergency Management Systems (SEMS) training program and the National Incident Management Systems (NIMS) training program.

The Grand Jury notes as recommended in the 2007-2008 Grand Jury Report, the PVUESD Superintendent contacted the CATALYST Coalition Coordinator at NCOE and arranged for lessons in Community Emergency Response for Pope Valley 7<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> grade students in the 2008-09 academic year. The Junior High students have their First Aid and CPR certification through the St. Helena Red Cross and the entire staff at PVES has been trained in Emergency Preparedness. All of the faculty/staff are certified in First Aid and CPR.

## Substance Abuse and Drug Education Programs

Students are provided minimal substance abuse and drug education via the Drug Abuse Resistance Education (D.A.R.E.) program. D.A.R.E. teaches students good decision making skills to help them avoid high-risk behaviors. The PVUESD faculty, staff and trustees are of one-mind in that they believe their campus is not at-risk regarding drugs, gangs and/or safety.

### Drug Abuse Resistance Education (D.A.R.E.)

*D.A.R.E. is a police officer-led series of classroom lessons. D.A.R.E. provides students the opportunity to learn skills they will need to avoid involvement in drugs, gangs and violence. Founded in 1983, and now implemented in 75 percent of the nation's school districts, the program offers a police-led series of classroom presentations that are intended to teach children how to resist peer pressure and live productive, drug and violence-free lives.*

At PVES, D.A.R.E. is taught to 5<sup>th</sup> and 6<sup>th</sup> graders and scheduled on an every-other year basis, since this is a combined class. A police officer comes once a week for the duration of the course, and for the graduation.

## Gangs

PVES believes parents are responsible for dressing their children and there is no prohibition of the colors red and blue which may be related to gangs. The School administration believes gang problems are not an issue with such a small group of students.

The School does not regularly schedule drug or weapons searches. There is no history of drugs or weapons on campus, and no students have been expelled from PVES in the past 30 years. However, there have been several disciplinary suspensions for minor isolated issues.

## FINDINGS

The 2008-2009 Grand Jury found:

1. Basic Aid District
  - a. PVUESD is classified as a “Basic Aid District” thereby receiving money generated from local property taxes.
  - b. property tax revenue accounts for approximately 73 percent of revenue of the District.
  - c. District expense has consistently increased over the past few years.
2. Property tax revenue increases are likely to subside over the next few years.
3. The District has a healthy financial reserve of \$352,019, which is substantially higher than the State recommended level of \$53,000.
4. The District believes it will be able to meet its financial obligations over the remainder of the 2008-09 fiscal year and the two subsequent fiscal years.
5. The current bus barn will not accommodate the larger, new “green” buses.
6. There is no multi-purpose room with a capacity to handle the entire student population or function as an indoor area for rainy or very hot day activities or indoor eating area/cafeteria/kitchen.
7. There are no “Columbine” type locks installed on any of the classroom doors on the campus.
8. The water system is old and many of the parts are non-replaceable.
9. Napa County Schools do not have access to regular visits from a school nurse.
10. PVUESD students are not provided annual substance abuse and drug education.
11. PVUESD participates with HMESD, through a Memorandum of Understanding, in a special education program for both Districts and they share a part-time aide.

## RECOMMENDATIONS

The 2008-2009 Grand Jury recommends:

1. PVUESD develop a long-term financial plan to cover a budgetary shortfall in the event that property tax revenue begins to subside over the next few years.
2. PVUESD continue to build reserves to cover the narrowing gap between decreasing revenue and increasing expenses.

3. PVUESD investigate a way to procure funding for a much needed a multi-purpose room to be used for kitchen/cafeteria; rainy or hot day physical education; art and after-school activities; and an area that can be used by the community during off-school hours.
4. PVUESD install “Columbine” type locks on all classrooms immediately.

## **COMMENDATION**

The PVUSD Board is commended for providing each student, grades 5<sup>th</sup> through 8<sup>th</sup>, with a laptop in order to facilitate differentiated learning. The teachers are commended for their dedication and professionalism. The District is also commended for purchasing an environmentally friendly school bus fleet. The SSC and the PVSPG are commended for providing funding for many “extras” for the students including the annual field trip to Yosemite for 6<sup>th</sup> through 8<sup>th</sup> grade students, and after school programs in sports and the arts.

## **REQUEST FOR RESPONSES**

The 2008-2009 Napa County Grand Jury requests the following responses:

1. The Superintendent of the PVUESD and the Board of Trustees respond to Recommendations 1,2,3,4.

## **GLOSSARY**

|            |  |
|------------|--|
| ADA        | Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990      |
| API        | Academic Performance Index                   |
| APR        | Academic Progress Reporting                  |
| AYP        | Adequate Yearly Progress                     |
| CLAD       | Cross-cultural Language Academic Development |
| CJUSD      | Calistoga Joint Unified School District      |
| D.A.R.E.   | Drug Abuse Resistance Education              |
| EC         | Education Code                               |
| ELL        | English Language Learner                     |
| GASB       | Governmental Accounting Standards Board      |
| GATE       | Gifted and Talented Education Program        |
| G.R.E.A.T. | Gang Resistance Education and Training       |
| LEAs       | Local Educational Agencies                   |
| HMESD      | Howell Mountain Elementary School District   |
| NCFD       | Napa County Fire Department                  |
| NCOE       | Napa County Office of Education              |
| NIMS       | National Incident Management Systems         |
| NSLP       | National School Lunch Program                |
| PI         | Program Improvement                          |
| PVSPG      | Pope Valley School Parent Group              |
| PVES       | Pope Valley Elementary School                |
| PVUESD     | Pope Valley Union Elementary School District |
| SAT        | Standardized Achievement Test                |
| SSC        | School Site Council                          |
| SEMS       | Standardized Emergency Management System     |
| SHUSD      | St. Helena Unified School District           |
| STAR       | Standardized Testing and Reporting           |
| SWRCB      | State Water Resources Control Board          |
| USDA       | United States Department of Agriculture      |

# APPENDIX

## Appendix 1

### Pope Valley Union Elementary School District

| Fiscal Year                       | 2004/05  | 2005/06 | 2006/07 | 2007/08   | 2008/09 projected |
|-----------------------------------|----------|---------|---------|-----------|-------------------|
| Revenue                           | 672,062  | 780,356 | 977,508 | 1,169,290 | 1,036,419         |
| Taxes levied                      | 487,918  | 530,686 | 682,366 | 853,270   | 812,227           |
| Expense                           | 738,049  | 806,198 | 956,260 | 1,068,256 | 1,031,281         |
| Increased/Decreased<br>Net Assets | <65,987> | 23,291  | 28,595  | 21,248    | 101,034           |

#### Increase in Property Taxes

|                             |          |      |
|-----------------------------|----------|------|
| 2002/03 - 2003/04           | 48,178   | 11%  |
| 2003/04 - 2004/05           | 42,455   | 8%   |
| 2004/05 - 2005/06           | 42,455   | 8%   |
| 2005/06 - 2006/07           | 43,551   | 8%   |
| 2005/06 - 2006/07           | 108,729  | 19%  |
| 2006/07 - 2007/08           | 170,904  | 25%  |
| 2007/08 - 2008/09 Projected | (42,000) | (6%) |

## Appendix 2

### [AYP Overall and by Criteria \(School Year 2007-08\)](#)

This table displays an indication of whether the school and the district made AYP overall and whether the school and the district met each of the AYP criteria.

| AYP Annual Yearly Progress Criteria        | School | District |
|--|--------|----------|
| Overall                                    | Met    | Met      |
| Participation Rate - English-Language Arts | 100%   | 100%     |
| Participation Rate - Mathematics           | 100%   | 100%     |
| Percent Proficient - English-Language Arts | 35%    | 35%      |
| Percent Proficient - Mathematics           | 41%    | 41%      |
| API - Academic Performance Index           | 750    | 750      |