



Pacifica School District

375 Reina Del Mar Avenue ★ Pacifica, California ★ 94044
(650) 738-6600 ★ (650) 557-9672 (fax)

Preparing Students for an Evolving World

www.pacificasd.org

MEMORANDUM

Administrative Services

Meeting of

10/4/2017

TO: Wendy S. Tukloff, Ed.D., Superintendent
For Board of Trustees

FROM: Josephine Peterson, Chief Business Official

SUBJECT: Response to Civil Grand Jury Report – “Should Tire Derived Products Be Used on Athletic Fields in San Mateo County Schools?” (Goal: Governance)
(Action)

Recommendation

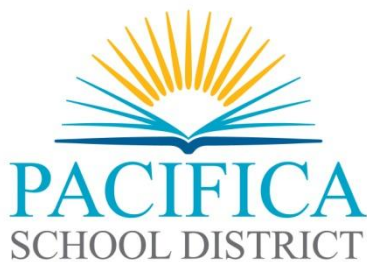
It is recommended that the Board approve the response to the Grand Jury report entitled “Should Tire Derived Products Be Used on Athletic Fields in San Mateo County Schools?”

Background

On July 10, 2017, the District received a letter sent to the Governing Board President, Grand Jury Report: “Should Tire-Derived Projects Be Used on Athletic Fields in San Mateo County Schools?”

The Grand Jury report was issued in response to citizen concerns that children may be exposed to potentially toxic materials by using artificial turf (AT) fields surfaced with Tire Derived Products (TDP), particularly crumb rubber. The Grand Jury investigated the use of the crumb rubber in athletic fields maintained by school districts, including the process and costs of installation and maintenance of such fields, and the monetary grants and subsidies offered as incentives to use TDP. The Grand Jury also examined arguments in favor of artificial turf fields made with crumb rubber, including how those fields compare with natural grass in terms of overall cost, maintenance costs, and safety for the people who use them and the potential impact on the environment.

The Grand Jury compared the cost of grass and crumb rubber fields, and found that the total costs involved in installing and maintaining a crumb rubber field are comparable to or greater than grass. Given the uncertainty about toxicity of crumb rubber the Grand Jury recommends that, when constructing a new field, or replacing an existing one, each school district formalize a process to evaluate options available, compare the relative pros and cons of each, include public input in such decisions, consider safety as well as cost and impose a moratorium on the use of crumb rubber until these policies are in place. The Grand Jury believes that it would be a mistake for San Mateo County school districts to fail to consider such potential health risks as a part of an overall analysis of whether to use crumb rubber on its athletic field surfaces.



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Integrated Services
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Chief Business Official
Will Lucey
Executive Director, ESS

Hon. Leland David, III
Judge of the Superior Court
c/o Charlene Kresevich
Hall of Justice
400 County Center; 2nd Floor
Redwood City, CA 94063-1655

Dear Ms. Charlene Kresevich:

The Pacifica School District (the “District”) received and reviewed the 2016-2017 Grand Jury Report titled “Should Tire-Derived Products Be Used On Athletic Fields in San Mateo County Schools?” We appreciate the Grand Jury’s interest in this matter. Having reviewed and considered the Grand Jury’s Findings and Recommendations, the District responses are as follows, pursuant to section 933.05 of the California Penal Code.

FINDINGS

F1. Of the 23 San Mateo County school districts, the following 16 reported to have fields that will require replacement in the next 5 years: Bayshore Elementary School District; Belmont-Redwood Shores School District; Brisbane School District; Burlingame School District; Cabrillo Unified School District; Hillsborough City School District; Jefferson Elementary School District; Jefferson Union High School District; Las Lomas Elementary School District; Millbrae School District; Portola Valley School District; Redwood City School District; San Carlos School District; San Mateo Union High School District; Sequoia Union High School District; South San Francisco Unified School District.

The District is unable to agree or disagree with this Finding, as it has not determined if its fields will be replaced or repaired in the next five years.

F2. The total installation costs for each artificial turf field infilled with crumb rubber equal approximately \$2.5 million - \$3.7 million; the total installation costs for each natural grass field are approximately \$2.0 million - \$2.5 million. The annual maintenance costs for each artificial turf field infilled with crumb rubber equal approximately \$10,600 per field, per year; the annual maintenance costs for each grass field equal approximately \$2850 per field, per year.

The District is unable to agree or disagree with this Finding, as the District was not a party to the Civil Grand Jury’s investigation, and therefore, does not have first-hand knowledge of the costs of installation and maintenance for artificial turf fields and natural grass fields.

F3. High demand for field use by schools and community groups is one reason why some school districts favor the installation of artificial turf fields instead of grass.

The District is unable to agree or disagree with this Finding, as the District does not have artificial turf fields and has not conducted any evaluation of artificial turf fields versus grass.

F4. According to the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, “studies to date have not shown an elevated health risk from playing on fields with tire crumb rubber, but these studies have limitations and do not comprehensively evaluate the concerns about health risks from exposure to tire crumb rubber.”

The District is unable to agree or disagree with this Finding, as the District was not a party to the Civil Grand Jury’s investigation, and therefore, does not have first-hand knowledge of the studies relied upon by the Grand Jury, nor of the studies rejected by the Grand Jury, nor of all statements made by the US EPA regarding athletic turf fields.

F5. The San Mateo County Office of Education reported that it is the responsibility of each school district’s Board of Trustees and Superintendent to develop policies regarding the issue of athletic field installation or replacement.

The District agrees with the San Mateo County Office of Education that each school district’s Board of Trustees and Superintendent are responsible for developing their own policies regarding the issue of athletic field installation and replacement.

F6. The San Mateo-Foster City School District and the San Mateo Union High School District have written policies regarding school construction and renovations, but neither has written guidelines or policies governing the decision-making process for constructing or replacing athletic fields.

The District agrees with the San Mateo County Office of Education that each school district’s Board of Trustees and Superintendent are responsible

The District is unable to agree or disagree with this Finding, as District is unaware of all the policies of the San Mateo-Foster City School District and the San Mateo High School District.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The San Mateo County Grand Jury recommends that each San Mateo County School District shall:

R1. Produce written guidelines for the decision-making process involved in field installation and replacement, which shall include the following:

R1a: Consider the uncertainty regarding the safety of tire-derived products used on school fields, particularly crumb rubber.

The Pacifica School District certainly agrees that safety of field materials is an important consideration and will implement this recommendation.

R1b: Evaluate and make their decisions on policy development and field replacements based on current scientific evidence regarding the use of crumb rubber on athletic fields as it becomes available, whether or not the EPA report is complete.

The Pacifica School District will implement this recommendation when considering replacement of fields.

R1c: Undertake measures to increase community involvement during the field replacement evaluation process, including discussion regarding potential concerns about the safety of crumb rubber or other tire-derived products. This could be similar to the 2013 City of San Mateo study regarding the possibility of using artificial turf on its fields, which included extensive public outreach for comment, using post cards, email, website comment, community workshops and capture surveys to solicit and collect public input.

The Pacifica School District appreciates but disagrees with this Recommendation as the District has a robust public process which incorporates these considerations.

R2. Consider (among other factors) the following when selecting materials for their athletic fields and playgrounds: 1. Safety to humans and animals 2. Suitability based upon the location's intended use and frequency of use 3. Cost (of installation and lifecycle requirements) and manufacturer warranty.

The Pacifica School District will implement this recommendation when considering replacement of fields.

R3. Impose a moratorium on the utilization of artificial turf with crumb rubber infill until the Environmental Protection Agency concludes its study or until all the policies listed above have been implemented.

The Pacifica School District will impose a moratorium on utilization of artificial turf with crumb rubber infill until the Environmental Protection Agency concludes its study or until all the policies listed above have been implemented.

Both the Grand Jury Report and these responses were presented to and approved by the District's Board of Trustees at its meeting held on October 4, 2017.

Please do not hesitate to contact me if you have questions or require addition information.

Sincerely,

Josephine Peterson
Chief Business Official