

AVENAL HIGH SCHOOL FOLLOW-UP VISIT

The State of California Grand Jury Association has recently recommended that follow-up visits to prior year findings be made to determine whether progress has been made with regard to responses. On February 6, 2019, the Reef-Sunset Unified School District (RSUSD) was visited in order to ascertain whether progress had been made at Avenal High School. Those findings are as follows:

Finding #1 – There is a great need for the expansion of the English Language Learner (ELL) Program.

RSUSD Response: The District agrees with the recommendation to work closely with developing programs to assist ELL students with transition from high school to college. In addition, the District has started an ELL for adults with classes being offered both during the day and evening.

Kings County Grand Jury (KCGJ) Follow-up: Avenal High School continues to seek out ways that can be of benefit to the limited English ability student in learning the English language. The Avenal High School principal stated that an additional period was added for ELL. This period was added with no instructional minutes added to the academic day due to an adjustment in the master schedule.

Finding #2 – There were potential problems relating to student and staff parking on campus.

RSUSD Response: The District agrees to create separate student parking.

KCGJ Follow-up: Avenal High School has developed a master plan for parking. At the beginning of the 2018-19 school year parking lots were defined with students parking in designated areas. Staff parking is permitted in designated staff parking areas.

Finding #3 – There were potential safety hazards in dropping off children for the child care center.

RSUSD Response: Avenal High School has closed the entrance gate next to the child care center for the 2018-19 school year.

KCGJ Follow-up: It was observed that the back parking lot and child care center had been blocked off with limited staff only parking. The pick up of children is managed better because of the overall parking guidelines.

Finding #4 – With the current school climate in the United States there is the need for additional campus security.

RSUSD Response: Avenal High School has an extensive video surveillance system that allows staff to monitor student activity anywhere on campus. In addition, there is a full-time campus aide assigned to general campus supervision while students are on campus.

KCGJ Follow-up: It was observed that the high school secretary actively monitors the 32 cameras on campus. Additionally, the principal and both assistant principals, as well as the campus aide pull up the same monitors on their IPADs. It was also reported that this action has decreased student altercations on campus. There is currently no campus enclosure fence around the campus.

Finding #5 – There are some classes where the teaching and/or classroom management are in need of help.

RSUSD Response: Avenal High School administration is monitoring classrooms on a regular basis to ensure appropriate teaching and classroom management, providing instructional and management support through the use of Instructional Strategies Coaches. Teachers are provided real-time coaching which is a confidential issue addressed in accordance with the Collective Bargaining Contracts and treated accordingly.

KCGJ Follow-up: It was disclosed that there is a coach on campus. Teachers can approach the coach with a privacy component. Additionally, the principal has received ‘mentor’ training. It was also noted by the principal that there must be a collaborative effort to improve teaching skills. The principal shared that one teacher is honored at every board meeting. It was also mentioned that the principal honors teacher/teachers at each staff meeting for ‘over-and-above’ actions/skills.

Finding #6 – There are classrooms with missing and/or damaged ceiling tiles.

RSUSD Response: School administration will add facility inspection to their daily/weekly classroom observations and submit work orders to the District maintenance department or school site custodian.

KCGJ Follow-up: The tiles in question were replaced immediately after the official grand jury report was published.

Finding #7 – There is no Career Center at the Avenal High School campus as in other Kings County High Schools.

RSUSD Response: The District agrees with Finding 7. Avenal High School will explore housing a Career Center in the existing Counseling office or Library.

KCGJ Follow-up: Principal noted that this has not been done yet. However, a Career Fair has been developed. Additionally, prior graduates have been invited in to speak about their jobs. Avenal High School is exploring with no real timeline, and agrees that they should have a career center.

Finding #8 – Avenal High School does not provide printed class information to students and depends on spoken word from Counselors for information.

RSUSD Response: The District agrees with Finding 8. Avenal High School will digitize their current course description catalog and post it on the school's website and publish it in the Student/Parent Handbook. School Counselors will continue to advise students via email and in person as needed.

KCGJ Follow-up: The principal noted that written course descriptions have a goal to be digitized and online by end of the school year. It was noted that course descriptions online or in the district handbook are NOT an Academic Handbook. Information published in the yearly Student/Parent Handbook change each year which includes possible changes in the graduation requirements.

Finding #9 – Misuse of the cell phone policy in classrooms was evident which results in loss of instructional time.

RSUSD Response: The District agrees with Finding 9. Avenal High School will amend the Student/Parent Handbook regarding student cell phone use.

KCGJ Follow-up: The principal noted that all must agree on cell phone policy, and abide by the rules, and then enforce the rules. It was also noted that it may be as simple as having signs that say "Cell phones in Use", or "Cell phones Off". While it was apparent that nothing has been done, at least some thought has been given to the finding.