



2024-25 GRAND JURY REPORT EL DORADO COUNTY JUNE 1, 2025 - CASE #25-10

COMPLIANCE AND CONTINUITY REPORT

The 2024-2025 Civil Grand Jury reviewed responses to the 2023-2024 reports and the progress made on recommendations, while informing the public of the continuous nature of Grand Jury work across multiple terms.

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Cover Caption: Grand Jury room, Placerville.

SUMMARY

Summary

“All I want is compliance with my wishes, after reasonable discussion.”

- Winston Churchill

The El Dorado County (County) Civil Grand Jury may appear to be an institution that exists continuously, however, it is a series of individual Grand Juries, each of which is impaneled for one year (July 1 – June 30), as mandated in the California Constitution and statutes. No jury is a continuance of any other and is independent and separate from all others. A Grand Jury may forward citizen complaints or research from incomplete investigations, but each subsequent Grand Jury must make its own decisions on whether and how to pursue those investigations. They do not have access to any work product generated by the previous Grand Jury that is not published for the public and must begin any forwarded investigations from the beginning.

The purpose of this report is to report on the responses to the prior year's Grand Jury reports to determine if the required entities met their statutory requirements and to provide updates on accepted recommendations that were to be completed during this Grand Jury term. While responses and follow-throughs were generally excellent throughout the County, some noteworthy exceptions require mentioning in this report.

Background

Each County Civil Grand Jury investigates County government during its one-year term. It may also investigate city governments, agencies, schools, and special districts within the County. Each investigation may generate a report containing evidence, with findings of facts derived from that evidence, and may recommend actions based on those findings. Each report may require responses to identified findings and recommendations from the officials responsible for the subject of the report.

Grand Jury reports may be published and released any time during the Grand Jury term. The time involved in conducting investigations, evaluating information gathered, and writing reports results in reports being published between the middle and the end of the term.

Responses must be submitted within a timeframe of 60 or 90 days from the date the report is published, depending on the respondent. Based on the report release date responses may be received after the issuing Grand Jury's term has ended. The current Grand Jury receives report responses rather than the issuing Grand Jury. It is then incumbent upon the current Grand Jury to evaluate the responses for statutory compliance and completion.

DISCUSSION

Discussion

The 2024-2025 Grand Jury reviewed responses to the reports issued by the 2023/2024 Grand Jury. In most cases, responses were timely and complied with provisions of the California Penal Code. Follow-up actions specified in the responses had either been implemented, were in the process of being implemented, were not being implemented, or required further analysis.

The Grand Jury commends those local agencies and districts that provided timely and compliant responses to the reports of prior Grand Juries, as well as their commitment to implementing recommendations for improving programs and services.

Responses to reports published by the 2023/2024 Grand Jury were reviewed to determine:

1. Did they comply with the provisions of the California Penal Code?

Penal Code #933.05, subdivision (b), states that, as to each Grand Jury recommendation, the responding person or entity shall report one of the following actions:

- a) If the recommendation has been implemented, a summary of the implementation must be given.
- b) If the recommendation will be implemented in the future, a time frame must be specified for completion.
- c) Should an agency respond that further study is required to accomplish a recommendation, the study must be completed within six months.
- d) When a response claims the recommendation is not warranted or is not reasonable, an explanation must be provided.

2. Have the actions promised in a response been completed?

The current Grand Jury completed a review of all responses to the 2023/2024 Grand Jury report and found most to be complete and in compliance. All responses were received within the required 60 or 90-day timeframe except for two as noted below.

DISCUSSION

COMPLIANCE: LATE OR NO RESPONSE

Case 24-07: County Office of Education: Are Our Schools Doing Enough to Address Sexual Harassment?

Recommendation 8 - EDCOE and County school districts should bring their Title IX website requirements up to date by December 31, 2024.

Response by Gold Trail Union School District (GTUSD)

GTUSD did not respond by the required due date of August 13, 2024. A follow-up letter was sent to the school district August 20, 2024. Their response was received September 10, 2024.

Response by Pioneer Unified School District (PUSD)

PUSD did not respond by their required due date of August 13, 2024. A follow-up letter was sent to the school district on August 20, 2024. As of the writing of this report their response has not been received.

Refer to the [Grand Jury website, Reports and Responses](#) for all reports and responses.

CONTINUITY: REPORT RESPONSES REQUIRING FOLLOW-UP

Case 24-01: Georgetown Airport: A Disaster Waiting to Happen

The 2023/2024 Grand Jury became aware of a serious safety issue at the Georgetown Airport. Grave concern was expressed regarding tall pine trees surrounding the airport. The issue was serious enough that Caltrans shut the airport down for night operations.

Recommendation 1: The County needs to have a funded plan to address all tree hazards at the Georgetown Airport by the end of March 2024, completing removal of the tree and pole hazards by September 2024, to the satisfaction of Caltrans and meeting FAA regulations.

Response by El Dorado County Board of Supervisors: *The recommendation has not been implemented but will be implemented in the future. The County has executed a contract with a licensed timber operator to remove the three acres of trees that pose the most imminent threat. This work is estimated to be completed by June 30, 2024. Relocation of the obstruction pole is estimated to take place in early 2025.*

DISCUSSION

The County removed the trees by August 2024.

The County, per the recommendation in the 2023-2024 report, also moved the oversight of the airports from the Planning and Building Department to the Office of the CAO effective July 1, 2024. As of September 2024, the Georgetown airport resumed full activities including nighttime takeoffs and landings.

Case 24-05: El Dorado Hills CSD: Controversy and Concerns Demand Change

Recommendation 4: By December 31, 2024, the County District Attorney's office should complete the investigation of any potential ethics or conflicts of interest violations, including required FPPC Form 700 disclosures, raised by the former GM's consulting arrangement with DTA.

Response by El Dorado County District Attorney: *Agree. This investigation is ongoing.*

As of May 2025, the investigation is still ongoing, and no public action has been taken by the District Attorney's Office. Further tracking of this item is warranted until closure.

Recommendation 9: By September 30, 2024, CSD should review, revise, and publicize its Master Plan from 2021 with realistic timelines for all new park development, as well as accurate and realistic cost estimates that can be funded and executed within a 10-year planning period.

Response by El Dorado Hills CSD: *This Recommendation has not been implemented but will be implemented in the future: The District has planned and budgeted for a complete review and revision of the 2021 Master Plan beginning in FY25, which starts on July 01, 2024, in accordance to our policy for a five (5) year review. The outcome of the EDHCSD Response El Dorado County Grand Jury Report #24-05 Page 14 of 16 revised Master Plan will have an influence on the District's ten-year Capital Improvement Plan. This is a very comprehensive review process and plan revision that includes community input on several occasions, which cannot be completed in the timeframe recommended.*

As of May 2025, El Dorado Hills CSD ("CSD" or "the District") has not updated its Master Plan. They have received bids from contractors to develop the plan for significantly higher costs than they budgeted for in the 2025 Fiscal Year, but neither bid was accepted, and no work has begun. Additional follow-up will be required to track this commitment by the 2025-2026 Grand

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Jury. Related to Recommendation 11 in the report, El Dorado Hills CSD has not solicited public input on the Master Plan and how Park Impact Fees should be allocated.

Recommendation 10: Within 90 days, CSD should employ or retain a full-time licensed CPA professional to be Treasurer/CFO-equivalent.

Response by El Dorado Hills CSD: *This Recommendation has not been implemented but will be implemented in the future: As stated in the Findings, the concerns of the Grand Jury are a function of District Policy and not due to the lack of having a CPA on staff or retainer. However, the District recognizes that government accounting is unique and complicated; and reporting is always changing with Governmental Accounting Standards Board (GASB) regulations having new requirements that the District must adhere to each year. District staff understand that education is a priority and will work towards having at least one member of the finance department receive a certification in government accounting through a reputable government entity, including GFOA and/or California Society of Municipal Officers (CSFMO). The goal will be to have this completed by December 2025. Additionally, the District will look at incorporating an appropriate accounting certification requirement for future recruitments.*

As of May 2025, El Dorado Hills CSD has not retained a CPA.

Recommendation 12: Within 90 days, CSD should document its plans for Bass Lake Park and justify why CSD took on the obligation to build a turnkey park in Village J7, and how development of Bass Lake Park will now proceed up through park completion proposed by CSD in FY 31.

Response by El Dorado Hills CSD: *This Recommendation requires further analysis: With the District's acquisition of 55 acres of the old executive golf course and the option to acquire the remaining 41.5 acres, the Bass Lake Park design may be subject to change depending on the community input for the Central EDH Park and what amenities that park will have. The community outreach project for Central EDH Park will run through summer at which time the District will be in a better position to define and document its plans for Bass Lake park. With regard to the turnkey park in Village J, the District participated in a settlement which was negotiated between Parker Development, the District, and El Dorado County that provided the 12.5 acres and \$3.5M in funding identified from the County's Serrano CFD 1992-1 that had been*

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slated for the development of the parkland. Given the years of delay in the construction of the turnkey park, and that the District had recently acquired acreage from Rescue Unified School District that was adjacent to the Village J lot, it was envisioned that the Village J lot could be incorporated into a larger park project. With that newer vision, the District elected to accept the land and funding and construct the park itself. To assist the community in understanding the history of this decision, the District will be seeking to create a public review of the information and series of events that led up to the settlement agreement between the three parties whereby the District accepted the 12.5 acres and \$3.5M in funding in order to incorporate the J Lot H parkland into the larger Bass Lake Park project.

As of May 2025, the District has not updated its plans for Bass Lake Park, which would be incorporated into the Master Plan update it has not yet developed. The District has yet to exercise its option on the additional 41.5 acres of the Old Executive Golf Course property, making it difficult to determine plans for any development at Bass Lake. The District did not create a public review of the information and series of events that led to the settlement agreement as intended. In a preliminary budget review meeting in April 2025, the District CFO stated that they had not received the \$3.5 million available from the Mello-Roos account, as it was still being held by the County pending completion of the park. The agreement with the County and Serrano Associates that obligated EDH CSD to take over construction of the park did not include pre-construction access to the Mello-Roos funds. Follow-up is warranted on this item by the next Grand Jury, should they elect to do so.

Case 24-07: County Office of Education: Are Our Schools Doing Enough to Address Sexual Harassment?

Recommendation 3: EDCOE should work with the employee unions to revise their bargaining agreements to permit schools to automate tracking on all buses and monitor bus drivers' locations during transportation of students. This should be completed by March 31, 2025.

Response by El Dorado County Office of Education: *This recommendation is already underway. EDCOE buses are equipped with radios with GPS tracking for EDCOE employees. EDCOE will further address this issue with the applicable bargaining units during the 2024-2025 school year.*

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Recommendation 4: EDCOE should work with the employee unions to revise their bargaining agreements to permit schools to install cameras that have monitoring capability on all buses. A designated staff person or automation should monitor the locations of buses during transportation of students.

Response by El Dorado County Office of Education: *We have implemented and plan to further implement this recommendation. After collective bargaining negotiations, in February 2023, EDCOE installed cameras on some vehicles as part of a pilot program. Currently all vehicles transporting Special Services students, home-to-school and school-to-home, are equipped with video cameras. EDCOE will further address this issue with the applicable bargaining units during the 2024-2025 school year.*

Recommendation 5: EDCOE should develop and implement policies and procedures that require supervisors and managers to closely monitor classified staff while working around students. If necessary, they should hire additional staff to achieve this goal. This should be done by March 31, 2025.

Response by El Dorado County Office of Education: *We require further analysis of this recommendation. EDCOE will further address this issue with the applicable bargaining units during the 2024-2025 school year.*

Recommendation 6: EDCOE should implement sexual harassment prevention training for all students, including how to recognize and report it. This training should begin in kindergarten. EDCOE should offer parents the option to opt out. This should begin by March 31, 2025.

Response by El Dorado County Office of Education: *We require further analysis of this recommendation. Generally, a student in grades K-3 cannot be suspended or expelled for sexual harassment. (See Cal. Educ. Code § 48900.2). Students in grades 7-12 receive instruction regarding “sexual harassment, sexual assault, sexual abuse, and human trafficking.” (See Cal. Educ. Code 51934.) EDCOE Superintendent Policy 5145.7 provides that all EDCOE students receive age-appropriate information on sexual harassment.*

Case 24-09: Election Integrity: Separating Fact from Fiction

Recommendation 5: By November 2024, the Registrar of Voters should begin publishing a periodic newsletter (e.g., online blog or social media) designed to acknowledge and address

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public concerns. Questions should be solicited and screened to avoid the social media free-for-alls of the past.

Response by El Dorado County Board of Supervisors: *The recommendation will be implemented. The Elections Department has a Voter Integrity page which addresses public concerns regarding the mis/dis information. The Department will add a quarterly newsletter in 2025.*

The County Elections Office issued its first quarterly newsletter “Election Insight” in April 2025.

Recommendation 6: The Elections Department should conduct a public poll of election integrity concerns by the end of 2024 and 2025 to measure any improvements in public perception and the success of the public outreach.

Response to R6: Respondent: El Dorado County Board of Supervisors: *The recommendation will be implemented in part. The Elections Department will poll the voters after the 2024 General Election; however, the next poll will not occur until after the next major election cycle in 2026.*

The Elections Department conducted a poll of election integrity concerns and published the results before the November election, and then conducted an open house to share the results. There is no reason to not conduct such a poll before the next major election cycle rather than after.

Recommendation 7: By January 1, 2025, the Registrar of Voters should establish a volunteer public advisory board to help monitor election processes, make improvements, and coordinate public outreach/communication.

Response by El Dorado County Board of Supervisors: *The recommendation requires further analysis. The Elections Department tried to establish a Voter Advisory Committee in 2022 and reached out to the Republican and Democratic Central Committees as well as members of the public. None of the groups or the public responded with any interest. In accordance with the Grand Jury’s recommendation, the Elections Department will try again to establish a Voter Advisory Committee by December 31, 2025.*

DISCUSSION

There appears to be a great deal of public interest in such an advisory committee still and the Grand Jury awaits the further analysis to see if this can be implemented by the end of 2025.