



# SAN MATEO-FOSTER CITY SCHOOL DISTRICT

September 8, 2017

Grand Jury Foreperson  
Court Executive Office  
Hall of Justice  
400 County Center  
Redwood City, CA 94063-1655  
Email: [grandjury@sanmateocourt.org](mailto:grandjury@sanmateocourt.org)

Dear Grand Jury Foreperson:

The San Mateo – Foster City School District (the “District”) received and reviewed the 2016-2017 Grand Jury Report entitled “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 responds 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 five 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 Lomitas 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 and South San Francisco School District.*

The District agrees with this Finding as the San Mateo – Foster City School District is not planning to replace fields 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 does not have first-hand knowledge of the costs of installation and maintenance for artificial turf fields nor does the District maintain natural grass fields for athletic use.

*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.*

Agree.

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

Agree.

*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.*

Agree.

*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.*

Agree for the San Mateo – Foster City School District. The District is unable to agree or disagree with this Finding for the San Mateo Union High School District.

### RECOMMENDATIONS

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 produced used on school fields, particularly crumb rubber.*

The District certainly agrees that safety of field materials is an important consideration and would implement this Recommendation should there be an interest at some point in time in replacement of natural grass for artificial turf.

*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 District would implement this Recommendation should there be an interest at some point in time in the replacement of natural grass for artificial turf.

*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 including extensive public outreach for comment, using post cards, email, website comment, community workshops and capture surveys to solicit and collect public input.*



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The District 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 District would implement this Recommendation should there be an interest at some point in time in the replacement of natural grass for artificial turf.

*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 District is not planning to replace any natural grass fields in the next five years. Should there be an interest at that point in time, the District would implement the Recommendations listed.

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 September 14, 2017.

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

Sincerely,

Joan Rosas, Ed.D.  
Superintendent