

# COMMENDATION REPORT PUBLIC SCHOOL FACILITIES

## Reason for the Report

The 2004/2005 Grand Jury per Penal Code Section 925 inspected several county schools, and also followed up on concerns identified by previous Grand Juries.

## Scope of the Investigation

### **Sites Visited**

- Golden Sierra High School
- Divide High School
- Ponderosa High School
- Shenandoah High School
- Union Mine High School
- Sierra Ridge Middle School
- Pine Ridge Elementary School
- Emigrant Trail Elementary School

### **People Interviewed**

- Superintendent of the County Office of Education
- Directors of the County Office of Education
- Principals of the various High Schools
- Vice Principals
- Teachers
- Librarian
- Kitchen Staff
- Maintenance Personnel

## Background

County school sites not visited by the Grand Jury in the last four (4) years were chosen for inspection. Ponderosa High School and Indian Diggins School were found by previous Grand Juries to have potentially hazardous conditions.

Ponderosa High School needs to obtain the necessary funds to build a “turn out” in the available space on school property for the safety of the students, to prevent accidents and to reduce congestion and improve traffic flow.

The Grand Jury requested that the principal at Indian Diggins School have a defective wheelchair lift repaired and a letter confirming that repairs had been made is in the file.

The Grand Jury was requested to investigate why the new Emigrant Trail School in Pollock Pines was closed and students sent to an older school. We were informed the Emigrant Trail

School (grades 3-4) had a population decrease to a point that Pinewood School (grades K-4) and Sierra Ridge Middle School (grades 5-8) were able to handle the total K-8 school population for the district.

Inspection of the Emigrant Trail School showed good use is being made of the facilities. The rooms are being used by the Boys and Girls Club, a home school teacher and her students, afterschool care for those students whose parents cannot pick up their children until 5 p.m. or later, etc. The Fire Department already conducts training programs on part of the land. Further uses are in the planning stages to make the facilities available to benefit the entire community and to increase revenue to the school district.

### **Commendation**

Under the current budgetary restraints that all school districts are facing we believe that the staff and teachers in the schools inspected are being remarkably resourceful in meeting their stated goals. The California School Recognition Program honored 192 public schools out of nearly 2,300 applicants from middle and high schools. Four (4) El Dorado County schools received the California Distinguished School Award. These four (4) county schools are: Golden Sierra High School, Sierra Ridge Middle School, Rolling Hills Middle School and Mountain Creek School. This highly coveted award is based in part on each school's Academic Performance Index, its average yearly progress and on community involvement. It is an honor for these schools to receive this award and reflects highly on the entire El Dorado county educational community.