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**MARIPOSA COUNTY
CIVIL GRAND JURY
2025-2026**

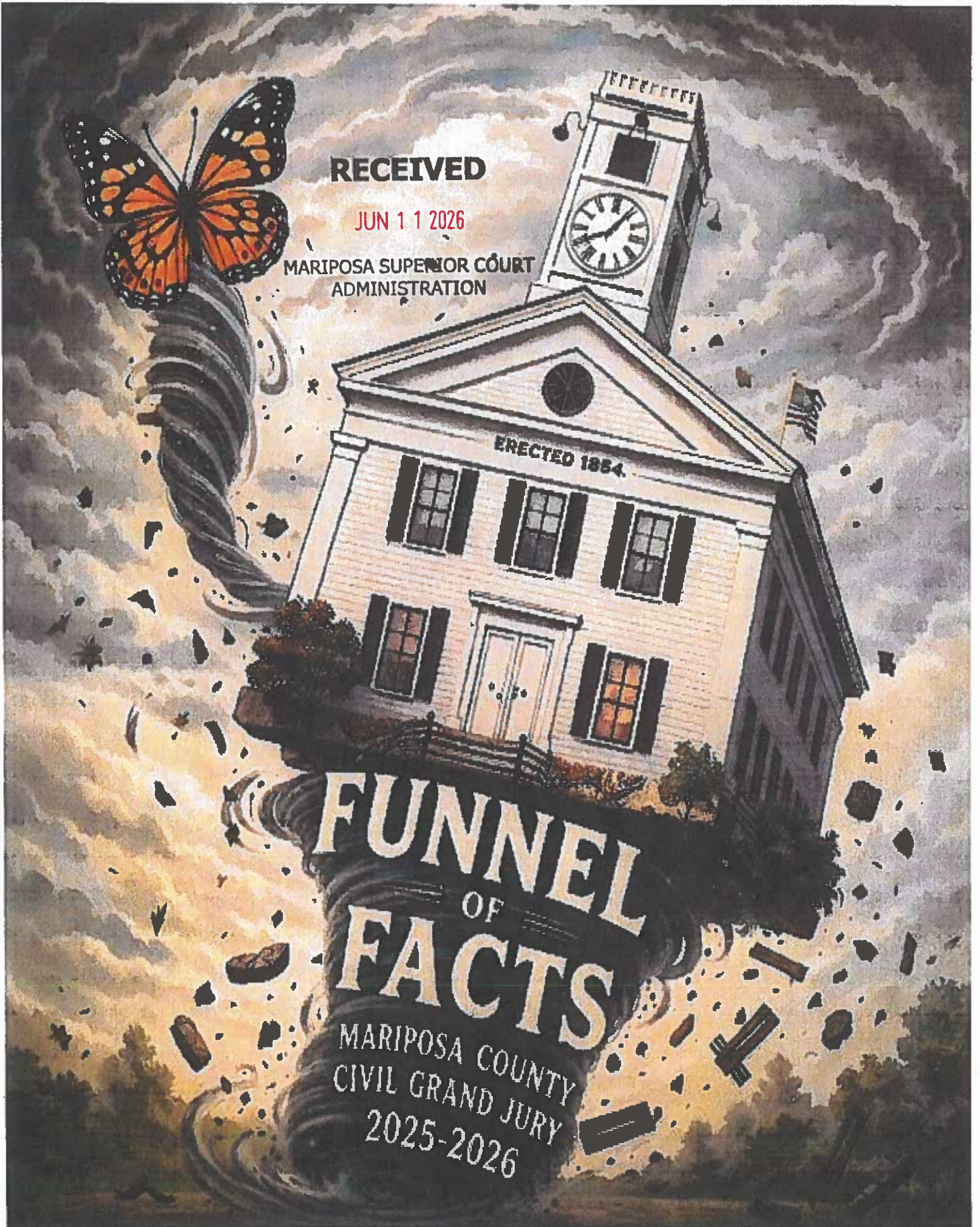


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June 8, 2026

Dear Judge Anita Starchman-Bryant:

On behalf of the 2025-2026 Mariposa County Civil Grand Jury (MCCGJ) and in accordance with California Penal Code Section 933, it is our privilege to present to you the Final Report.

Although Mariposa County faced extraordinary challenges during the course of the year, the jury stood united and focused solely on honoring the trust placed in us by the public. The turbulence never wavered our mission: to examine the operations of County Departments, Special Districts, and Joint Power Authorities, and to hold each to the highest standards of accountability, transparency, and efficiency.

Central to our work this year was a commitment to public outreach-ensuring that Mariposa County residents know the Civil Grand Jury exists to serve them. We developed an informational flyer and distributed it across the county, outlining the jury's mission, and how residents can engage with the process. We also published an excerpt in the local newspaper inviting citizens to share their concerns directly to us.

We extend our sincere gratitude to everyone who contributed to this year's work, those who prepared documents, met with us, and offered guidance. We humbly thank Judge Starchman-Bryant for the opportunity to serve as grand jurors. It was an honor we did not take lightly as a team, and we remained strong, dedicated, and united.

Respectfully,

Rebecca Harris

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Rebecca Harris', written over a horizontal line.

Mariposa County Grand Jury Foreperson 2025-2026

We the members of the 2025-2026 Mariposa County Civil Grand Jury
respectfully submit our Final Report, on this date, June 8, 2026.



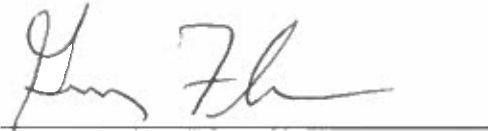
Rebecca Harris, Foreperson



Catherine Collamer



Alyssa Donnelly



Gary Flores



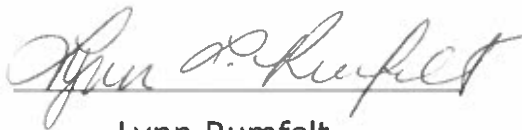
Jamie Gomes



Shari Lindsey



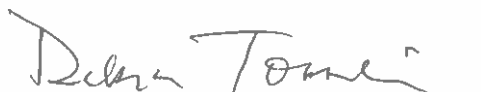
Charles Rhodes



Lynn Rumfelt



Christine Saulman



Debra Tomlin



Superior Court of the State of California County of Mariposa

Anita Starchman Bryant
Presiding Judge

Michael A. Fagalde
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June 18, 2026

Rebecca Harris
Grand Jury Foreperson

Ms. Harris:

I have read and reviewed the 2025-2026 Mariposa County Grand Jury Final Report.

At this time, I wish to personally thank you and the other grand jurors for your work on behalf of the citizens of Mariposa County. Without the dedication of those like you this vital part of our system would certainly fail.

Sincerely,

Honorable Anita Starchman Bryant
Presiding Judge

SUMMARY

The Mariposa County Civil Grand Jury (MCCGJ) is an independent, constitutionally mandated oversight body of eleven citizens sworn in by the Presiding Judge of the Superior Court. Operating as a collective, confidential unit, the Grand Jury serves as a vital watchdog link between local government and the public. State law empowers this body to examine the efficiency, honesty, and transparency of county government, public officials, special districts, and joint power agencies.

The 2025–2026 MCCGJ was empaneled in July 2025, initially consisting of citizens with interest in civil oversight. Early in the term, one member departed followed by the loss of two additional jurors to unforeseen circumstances. These vacancies were filled by alternates to restore the panel to full capacity. The panel adapted, collaborated, and successfully completed all statutory responsibilities, including mandated facility inspections and public process observations, thus promoting civil accountability.

MANDATES

Unlike a criminal grand jury, the Civil Grand Jury's mandate is strictly investigative and civil. State law requires strict confidentiality for the jury's operation and to ensure anonymity and community trust:

- **Institutional Oversight:** Mandated annual inquiries into the condition, safety, sanitation, and management of detention facilities within Mariposa County.

- **Democratic Integrity:** The jury is empowered to observe the operations of the Registrar of Voters to ensure secure and transparent elections.
- **Compelled Public Response:** A critical component of state law dictates that once a jury issues its final findings and recommendations, the affected governing bodies **are legally compelled** to provide a formal public response within a specified time frame. This ensures the jury's investigations lead to tangible administrative reform and public discourse.

COMPLAINT CORRESPONDENCE

During its tenure, the 2025–2026 Mariposa County Civil Grand Jury received a total of six complaints. The jury also reviewed the previous year's complaints. The jury responded to the complaints if possible, in a timely and appropriate manner. Of the six complaints received, two were submitted via email, and four were submitted through postal mail.

The Grand Jury recognizes the importance of community involvement in the oversight process, and encourages all Mariposa County residents to participate, by submitting complaints on matters of public concern. To raise awareness of this opportunity, the Grand Jury composed and distributed an informational flyer throughout the county with instructions on how and where to submit a complaint. The Jury is committed to increasing public engagement, public outreach, and encourages greater participation.

MT. BULLION CONSERVATION CAMP #39

The history of Mt. Bullion Conservation Camp:

The modern public service history of the site began in the mid-20th century when it transitioned from private mining to the California Youth

Authority (CYA). For decades, the camp focused on the rehabilitation of offenders through training and labor of basic forestry and fire suppression. This laid the groundwork for a cooperative state model. A pivotal shift occurred in October 2004, when the facility officially converted into an Adult Conservation Camp (CC #39) bolstering a firefighting program. Jointly operated by the California Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation (CDCR) and CAL FIRE, Mt. Bullion became a critical benefit to the residents of Mariposa County.

The grand jury's visit to the Mt. Bullion Conservation Camp on November 25, 2025 left an overall positive impression, with the facility appearing well-maintained, orderly, and professionally operated. Staff and inmates demonstrated respectful and cooperative interactions. The dormitory and sleeping areas were clean, tidy, and well organized, with personal belongings stored appropriately and no sanitation concerns observed.

The kitchen and food service areas were also clean and orderly, and staff reported that inmates are responsible for all food preparation and cleanup duties. During the visit, an inmate crew was actively engaged in clearing debris from roofs, demonstrating ongoing maintenance efforts and work readiness. Grounds throughout the camp were notably clean, well-kept, and free of debris, reinforcing the camp's emphasis on accountability, community service, and emergency deployment preparedness.

The camp also offers a variety of programs and privileges that contribute positively to morale, rehabilitation, and constructive use of free time. Inmates have access to a hobby shop that supports woodworking, crafts, and other skill-building activities, as well as an outdoor gym area for physical fitness and recreation. Indoor recreational opportunities include personal tablets, pool table, chess and board games, as well as ample

reading materials that encourage both leisure and personal development. These privileges appear to reinforce the incentive structure that encourages rule compliance and personal responsibility.

Staff-inmate relations throughout the visit appeared professional and respectful, with staff emphasizing the importance of trust and accountability within the camp's lower-security environment. Facility buildings and infrastructure were observed to be in good condition despite the camp's scheduled closure in January 2026, and no operational or safety deficiencies were identified during the inspection. The primary concern expressed by staff was the impending closure itself, as the camp has operated for 22 years and its closure may reduce available low-security rehabilitation opportunities.

OBSERVATION OF NOVEMBER SPECIAL ELECTIONS

Members of the Mariposa County Civil Grand Jury observed the November 4, 2025 Special Election. The jury's observation revealed a well-run and efficient process. The election was conducted by the Registrar of Voters alongside a unified team of eight employees, whose protocols and procedures were impressive and demonstrated a clear commitment to election integrity and operational efficiency.

MARIPOSA COUNTY ADULT DETENTION FACILITY

The current Mariposa County Adult Detention Facility officially opened its doors in March 1995, marking a significant transition in the county's approach to public safety and corrections. Designated as a Type II facility, it was built to house approximately 60 inmates, providing a larger environment

that allowed for the necessary segregation of male and female populations as well as varying inmate security levels.

In the decades since its opening, the facility has evolved to meet the complexities of modern California correctional law. This shift has required the jail to manage longer-term inmates and expand its medical and behavioral services to support a population with increasing mental health needs. The Mariposa County Civil Grand Jury conducts an annual inspection of the facility.

In December 2025, members of the Mariposa County Civil Grand Jury conducted an on-site tour of the facility's daily operations, physical conditions, and the quality of inmate services. The staff exhibited a level of professional conduct and operational efficiency. However, the aging infrastructure, as repeatedly noted over the last 10 years of Mariposa County Civil Grand Jury reports requires a concerted plan for repair.

Observations recorded during the facility tour highlight significant issues regarding the condition of the roof and door-locking security. Chief among these physical concerns of the leaking roof that has plagued the building, potentially leading to long-term water damage and compromised infrastructure. Beyond the physical shell of the building, the grand jury identified critical vulnerabilities within the electronic door systems. The reoccurring malfunctions of these systems introduce a substantial layer of operational risk, as they are the primary mechanism for maintaining a secure and divided environment. Any failure of these components compromises the access control required by staff to ensure the safety of both the custodial personnel and the inmate population.

Despite these challenges, the facility is currently in a state of construction, as evidenced by the major Heating, Ventilation, and Air Conditioning (HVAC) system upgrades underway at the time of the inspection. While these environmental improvements are a positive step

toward modernization, the need for a comprehensive plan for roof repair remains a high priority. Integrating a modernized interface is essential to resolve the ongoing door malfunctions and to bring the facility's technological infrastructure up to current security standards.

ID #	Findings	Recommendation
F1 / R1	F1: Roofing and Water Intrusion: The roof leaks directly over staff workstations. This poses a high risk of damaging computer systems and the electronic equipment. Numerous ceiling panels were missing across the facility, exposing the extent of water damage.	R1: The county needs to prioritize a plan to replace or substantially repair the roof to prevent further structural damage to the facility, prevent damage to electrical equipment, and to halt interior degradation.
F2 / R2	F2: Security and Safety Systems: The facility relies on an electronic door system. At the time of observation, there was no manual backup for a fail-safe mechanism.	R2: Door Fail-Safe: The implementation of a manual backup or fail-safe mechanism for the electronic door system.
F3 / R3	F3: It was reported to the Mariposa County Civil Grand Jury that the facility was understaffed by two female employees. Administration noted that retaining female staff was a continuing	R3: Retention Strategy: The county should develop an incentive program to fill the vacancies and retain current correctional staff.

	challenge due to the demanding nature of the environment.	
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To maintain the integrity and impartiality of its findings, the Mariposa Civil Grand Jury adheres to strict ethical standards regarding potential conflicts of interest. Transparency is a cornerstone of the watchdog process; therefore, it is standard practice to include a formal recusal disclaimer in any report where a member's personal or professional background might create a perception of bias. This ensures to the public that the investigation was conducted solely by objective participants and the final recommendations are untainted by outside influence.

Three members of the Mariposa County Civil Grand Jury recused themselves from this investigation to avoid any perceived conflict of interest. These members were not present for any testimony or discussions regarding this matter.

BIBLIOGRAPHY AND REFERENCES:

California Penal Code §919(b). Mandating the annual inquiry into the condition and management of public prisons within the county.

- California Code of Regulations, Title 15. Minimum Standards for Local Detention Facilities (Board of State and Community Corrections).
- California Code of Regulations, Title 24. California Building Standards Code (Part 1, Administrative; Part 2, Building).
- Board of State and Community Corrections (BSCC). Biennial Inspection Report: Mariposa County Adult Detention Facility. (2025).

- Mariposa County Board of Supervisors. Annual Budget: Capital Improvement Program and Departmental Allocations. (Fiscal Years 2024–2025).
- Mariposa County Civil Grand Jury. 2023-2024 Final Report: Operations and Infrastructure Review. (Published 2024).
- Site Tour and Physical Inspection. Mariposa County Adult Detention Facility. Conducted by the 2025-2026 Civil Grand Jury. (November 10, 2025).

MARIPOSA COUNTY SOLID WASTE AND RECYCLING FACILITY

The Mariposa County Civil Grand Jury conducted an investigation into the operational and financial status of the Mariposa County Solid Waste and Recycling Facility. A primary concern identified by the Jury is the incomplete implementation of the 2024 Solid Waste Management Plan (CORE report), which was designed to stabilize the facility’s financial baseline and extend the potential operational lifetime of the facility.

The Public Works Department identified issues with execution of the CORE report. The CORE report contains clear directives and consultant projections of structural shortfalls. Implementation of the CORE report remains the most direct strategy to comply with management standards and state-mandated regulatory frameworks.

The lack of formalized, long-term waste disposal contracts with Yosemite National Park, the Merced County Landfill and Recology has subjected the county to financial instability. In the short term, the absence of these agreements deprives the Solid Waste Enterprise Fund of foreseeable, high-volume commercial scale fee, forcing the county to rely on spot-market volume. Current implementation of the CORE report fee structure is limited to increases of dump fees shifting an unfair financial

burden directly onto local ratepayers and severely undermining the facility's self-sustaining mandate.

Central to the CORE report was the urgent requirement to minimize the \$11.9 million deficit in the Landfill Closure Maintenance Fund timeline. While the Board of Supervisors took action to approve an incremental 80% fee increase to address this liability, infrastructure goals have not kept pace with the plan's broader strategic benchmarks.

Reference:

Blue Ridge Services Montana Inc, Hamilton, Montana, 2024, pp. 1–74, *Final Core Report for Mariposa Landfill*.

ID #	Finding	Recommendation
F4 / R4	F4: The Department of Public Works has failed to fully implement the CORE Report.	R4: Fully execute all remaining phases of the CORE report, establishing a clear internal timeline for stalled infrastructure and operational milestones.
F5 / R5	F5: The Department of Public Works' failure to secure long-term, formalized waste disposal contracts with Yosemite National Park, Merced County Landfill and Recology creates fiscal	R5: Establish multi-year waste agreements with Yosemite National Park, Merced County Landfill and Recology.

	instability and shifts financial burden on local residential ratepayers.	
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To maintain absolute institutional impartiality and ensure the highest standards of professional integrity, one member of the Civil Grand Jury was formally recused from all deliberations, interviews, and final draft evaluations regarding the Mariposa County Solid Waste and Recycling Facility investigation. This procedure ensures that no conflict of interest, perceived or actual, influenced the findings, recommendations, or conclusions contained within this report.

MARIPOSA COUNTY UNIFIED SCHOOL DISTRICT/OFFICE OF EDUCATION

The Mariposa County Unified School District (MCUSD) and the Mariposa County Office of Education (MCOE) operate as special district under a unified administrative structure, where a single Superintendent and a five-member Board of Trustees manage both entities. Together, they serve approximately 1,700 students across a vast, geographically challenging 1,450-square-mile terrain, stretching from the remote foothills to Yosemite National Park. This necessitates a complex infrastructure network, it also demands highly efficient county-wide communication and administrative services to keep its communities connected and informed.

As one of Mariposa County's largest employers, the district's ability to serve this wide geographic area relies on recruiting and retaining specialized staff. However, this critical effort is severely impacted by the organization's

reliance on an outdated website. MCUSD/MCOE's digital visibility and public-facing web presence would benefit from modernization.

The district's website limitations extend beyond recruitment into the district's transition toward infrastructure and state-mandated fiscal transparency. The district currently addresses urgent repairs, while the site needs proactive updates. The online presence makes it difficult for the public to track progress, view financial reserves, or access vital campus updates. MCUSD/MCOE must urgently address these systemic website and digital platform issues to ensure administrative efficiency, safety, and community transparency.

Between December 2025 and February 2026, members of the Civil Grand Jury conducted multiple visits to the website: www.mcusd.org. This strategy involved accessing the site as a general member of the public, to test the following:

- **ADA Compliance:** Testing the site using automated accessibility tools and manual keyboard navigation to assess barriers.
- **Transparency Benchmarking:** Searching for specific mandated documents (Budgets, Local Control and Accountability Plan (LCAP), Audits, and Brown Act-compliant agendas).
- **Security and Privacy Assessment:** Transitions between webpages and portals for transparency in security and privacy functions.

The current infrastructure of the district's website reflects a reactive rather than proactive approach to technology. Individually, the school websites were found to be accessible and informative, however the larger district websites operated by MCOE and MCUSD are lacking accessibility and information.

The primary challenge lies in an unsearchable file-naming convention by treating the website as a file cabinet, rather than a dynamic communication tool. There are indications that the site may not fully meet federal ADA and Section 508 standards. This creates a risk of excluding a segment of the population and potentially exposes the taxpayers to legal liability.

The difficulty in accessing financial data including nonfunctioning links, specifically regarding bond oversight (Measure L), indicate a need for a centralized transparency portal. Modernizing these elements is necessary to ensure the district remains accountable to the public it serves.

ID #	Finding	Recommendation
F6/ R6	F6: Documents are not searchable: The website relies on scanned images of text (PDFs)with unclear naming conventions.	R6: Ensure all documents are searchable with descriptive file names.

F7 / R7	F7: Brown Act compliance: The district uploads school board agendas as non-searchable scanned images, which directly violates California's Brown Act requirement for searchable, platform-independent public postings.	R7: Remediate the agenda posting process. Ensure all future Board of Trustees and MCOE and Citizens Bond Oversight Committee(Measure L) agendas are posted in a fully searchable format in strict compliance with Government Code §54954.2.
F8 / R8	F8: There are indications that the website may not meet federal ADA compliance	R8: Perform an evaluation of the website's ADA compliance and implement necessary improvements.
F9 / R9	F9: Website Transitions: Links to external portals lack consistent school branding or "exit notices," which can lead parents and staff to dangerous phishing scams that mimic official sites.	R 9: Implement standard exit-warning screens.

To maintain the impartiality and professional integrity of this investigation, three members of the 2025–2026 Mariposa County Civil Grand Jury officially recused themselves from all proceedings, deliberations, and voting regarding the Mariposa County Unified School District (MCUSD) and Office of Education (MCOE).

References

- Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 (ADA), Title II. 42 U.S.C. § 12131 et seq. (Regarding non-discrimination in public services).
- California Government Code §54950 et seq. (The Brown Act). Specifically §54954.2 regarding the posting of searchable agendas.
- Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA). 20 U.S.C. § 1400 et seq. (Regarding procedural safeguards and parental participation).
- California Department of Education (CDE). *DataQuest: Mariposa County Unified School District Profile*. (Enrollment, suspension, and demographic data 2024–2025).
- California School Dashboard. *MCUSD Performance Overview*. (Metrics on chronic absenteeism and graduation rates).
- Mariposa County Unified School District. *Local Control and Accountability Plan (LCAP) 2024–2027*.
- MCUSD/MCOE Board of Trustees. *Regular Board Meeting Minutes and Agendas*. (January 2023 – May 2026).
- Measure L Citizens’ Bond Oversight Committee. *Annual Report on Bond Expenditures and Project Status*. (2024–2025).
- Staff Interviews. (December–March 2026).

REQUIRED RESPONSES

Pursuant to California Penal Code §933 and §933.05, the Civil Grand Jury requests responses from the following entities:

1. Mariposa County Board of Supervisors

Response required: 90 Days

The Board of Supervisors is required to respond to the following Findings and Recommendations regarding fiscal oversight, fee structures, and long-term capital strategy.

Response Instructions:

California Law (Penal Code §933.05) dictates the specific format for these responses. Respondents may not use general or vague language; each item must be addressed individually as follows:

Regarding Findings:

For each finding, the responding entity shall indicate one of the following:

1. Agree: The respondent agrees with the finding.
2. Disagree: The respondent disagrees wholly or partially with the finding. In this case, the response must specify the disputed portion and provide a clear explanation for the disagreement.

Regarding Recommendations:

For each recommendation, the responding entity shall report one of the following actions:

1. Implemented: The recommendation has already been put into practice (include a summary of the action taken).

2. Will Be Implemented: The recommendation has not yet been implemented but will be in the future (include a specific timeframe for completion).
3. Requires Further Analysis: The matter requires more study. The respondent must explain the scope of the study and provide a completion date not to exceed six months from the date of this report's publication.
4. Will Not Be Implemented: The recommendation is not warranted or is unreasonable (include a detailed explanation).

Reviewed: 

Honorable Anita Starchman Bryant, Per PC933