



Northern
California

Via Electronic Mail

March 4, 2021

State Superintendent Tony Thurmond
California Department of Education
Education Equity UCP Appeals Office
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Tthurmond@cde.ca.gov
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**Re: Appeal of Novato USD Final Decision On UCP Complaint Regarding
Discriminatory Admissions to San Marin High School STEM Program**

Dear State Superintendent Thurmond and Education Equity UCP Appeals Office,

The American Civil Liberties Union Foundation of Northern California (“ACLU”), on behalf of Novato Unified School District (“District”) parent Kate Reza, appeals the District’s final decision (“Decision”) on Ms. Reza’s Uniform Complaint Procedure (“UCP”) Complaint regarding discriminatory admissions and funding allocations into the District’s Science, Technology, Engineering and Math academic program (“STEM Marin Program”).

As discussed more fully in the UCP Complaint, attached as Exhibit 1, the District violated its legal obligations to District students under state and federal civil rights laws, including constitutional protections, by 1) using vague and subjective criteria, infected with racial and other identity-based bias, for admissions into the STEM Marin Program; 2) failing to address significant racial disparities in the STEM Marin Program, wherein Latine¹ and Black students were admitted to the STEM Marin Program in 2017-2018 and 2020-2021 at rates 3-10 times less than expected based on the rate of their enrollment districtwide; and 3) funding the STEM Marin Program at a disproportionately high level as compared to other districtwide programs, thereby funneling a disproportionate level of resources into a discriminatory program that disadvantages Hispanic/Latine, Black, and low-income students.

The District’s Decision, attached as Exhibit 2, agrees with the UCP Complaint that the District must create clear, explicit and objective criteria by which each student is evaluated for admission into the STEM Marin Program. Accordingly, the District has “updated the [STEM Marin Program] website” with a more specific description of the admissions process. Nevertheless, the new admissions process is deficient because the admissions criteria continue to be opaque and infected with bias in significant ways, and essential metrics by which students are evaluated for admission remain untethered to student skills related to STEM academics. Moreover, the incomplete remedies proposed by the District in its Decision do not suffice because the District has already

¹ Throughout this Appeal, the term Latine is used as an inclusive, gender-neutral alternative to refer to Hispanic, Latino, Latina, Chicano, and Chicana student populations.

closed its admissions process for the 2021-2022 school year.² Thus, the District apparently refuses to implement *for at least another year* whatever improvements it has made to the STEM Marin Program admissions process to address the serious legal problems identified in the UCP Complaint.

As discussed more fully below, we appeal to CDE because 1) the District's Decision fails to address the UCP Complaint's factual or legal allegations of discrimination on the basis of race/ethnicity and economic privilege, and unequal distribution of resources, in administration of the STEM Marin Program; 2) although the District agreed it should "create clear, explicit, and objective criteria by which each student is evaluated" for admission into the STEM Marin Program, the corrective action that it took failed to provide a proper remedy; and 3) the District's Decision fails to state a conclusion regarding the allegations of the UCP Complaint. 5 CCR 4632(b) (stating that bases upon which complainants may file an appeal to CDE of a school district's investigation report on a UCP complaint).

Jurisdiction

On December 7, 2020, Parent Kate Reza filed a UCP Complaint alleging significant problems with the District's administration of the STEM Marin Program leading to racial, ethnic, or other identity-based discrimination in the admissions process and programmatic funding allocations. On February 2, 2021, the District issued a Decision that claimed to address the legal problems described in the UCP Complaint. Although the District's Decision is dated January 25, 2021, it was not finalized or sent to Ms. Reza until February 2, per the email exchange between the ACLU and District Assistant Superintendent Jennifer Larson attached here as Exhibit 3. Ms. Reza received the District's Decision by mail on February 4, 2021. Ms. Reza timely appeals to CDE within thirty (30) calendar days of receiving the District's Decision. 5 CCR § 4632(b). We request that CDE review the issues raised in Ms. Reza's UCP complaint and issue remedial orders to address the legal violations, as further discussed below.

Bases Supporting the Appeal

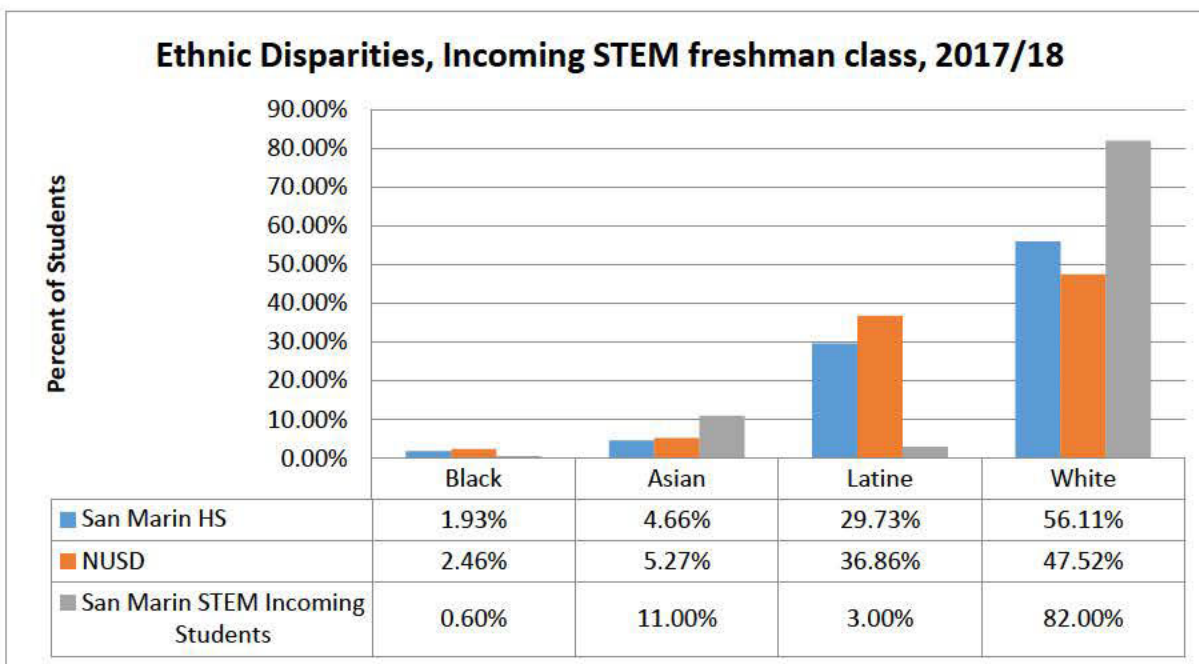
I. The District's Decision fails to address the UCP Complaint's factual or legal allegations of discrimination on the basis of race/ethnicity and economic privilege, and unequal distribution of resources, in administration of the STEM Marin Program.

Section II of the UCP Complaint, pages 5 through 8, detail the stark racial disproportionalities in admissions and enrollment data for the STEM Marin Program, none of which is addressed or acknowledged in the District's Decision except obliquely in one sentence in the section detailing the District's responses regarding "recommended remedies" from the UCP Complaint.³ As noted

² STEM MARIN, *STEM Marin Application 2020-2021* (2021), available at: <https://stemmarin.nusd.org/our-programs/stem-marin-application-2020-2021/> (noting "Application is closed for the 2021-2022 school year") (emphasis in original).

³ Ex. 2 at 2-3 ("The gender, race, and ethnic make [sic] of the program has become closer to that of the full school community as a result of these reviews.").

in the UCP Complaint, “in 2017/2018, Hispanic/Latinx students represented only 3% of the incoming class [to the STEM Marin Program], *less than 1/10th of that expected based on the ethnic/racial distribution of the District.*”⁴ The only reason data analysis on this measure is missing from the UCP Complaint for the 2018-2019 and 2019-2020 school years is that the District refused to provide data pursuant to Ms. Reza’s California Public Records Act (“PRA”) request. Nevertheless, in 2020-21, only 10% of incoming students to the STEM Marin Program were Latine, less than one-third what one would expect based on the districtwide student enrollment of Latine students.⁵ As reflected in Ms. Reza’s professional data analysis, shown in the table below and included in the UCP Complaint, Black students were also disproportionately impacted during the 2017-18 school year, when they were represented in the incoming STEM Marin Program class at a rate three times less than the enrollment of Black students in San Marin High School and over four times less than Black student enrollment districtwide.



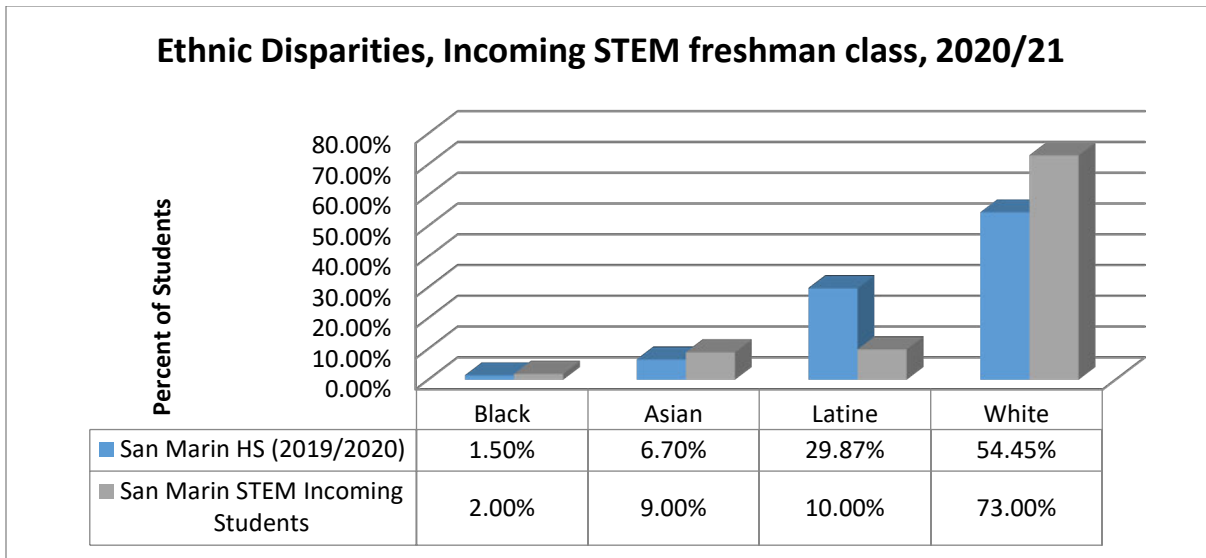
⁴ Ex. 1 at 5.

⁵ *Id.*; DataQuest, California Dep’t of Educ., “2019-20 Enrollment by Ethnicity: Novato Unified Report,”

<https://data1.cde.ca.gov/dataquest/dqcensus/EnrEthLevels.aspx?cds=2165417&agglevel=district&year=2019-20> (showing districtwide enrollment of Hispanic/Latino students at 38.7% of total student enrollment); DataQuest, California Dep’t of Educ., “2018-19 Enrollment by Ethnicity: Novato Unified Report,”

<https://data1.cde.ca.gov/dataquest/dqcensus/EnrEthLevels.aspx?cds=2165417&agglevel=district&year=2018-19> (showing districtwide enrollment of Hispanic/Latino students at 37.3%); California Dep’t of Educ., “2017-18 Enrollment by Ethnicity: Novato Unified Report,”

<https://data1.cde.ca.gov/dataquest/dqcensus/EnrEthLevels.aspx?cds=2165417&agglevel=district&year=2017-18> (showing districtwide enrollment of Hispanic/Latino students at 36.3%).

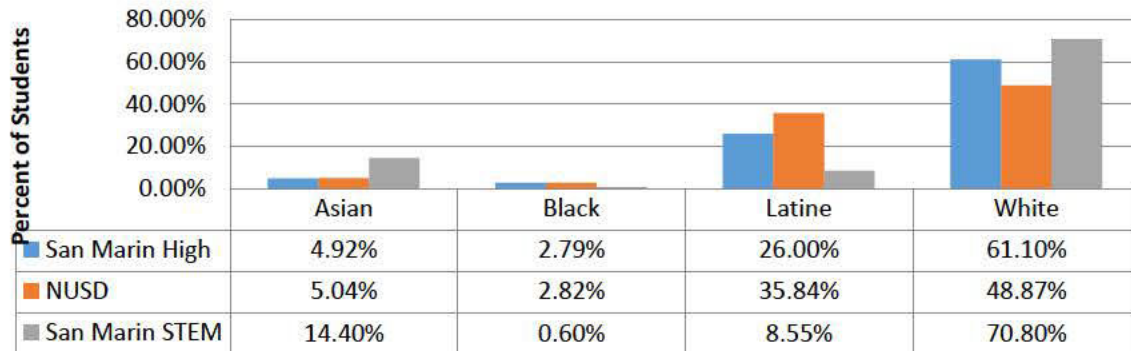


Moreover, as seen in the tables below, stark racial/ethnic disparities exist in enrollment at **all** grade levels of the STEM Marin Program (grades 9-12), which would naturally follow from the disproportionate under-admission of Black and Latine students beginning in ninth-grade.⁶ In 2016-17, Black students in grades 9-12 were enrolled in the STEM Marin Program at a rate four-and-a-half times less than would be expected based on the enrollment of Black students districtwide and in San Marin High School. During the 2019-20 school year, Black students in grades 9-12 were enrolled in the STEM Marin Program at a rate significantly below their districtwide rate of enrollment.⁷ Latine students were consistently under-enrolled every year for which the District provided data, at rates less than half their rate of districtwide enrollment from 2018-2020 and less than one-quarter their rate of enrollment during the 2016-17 school year.

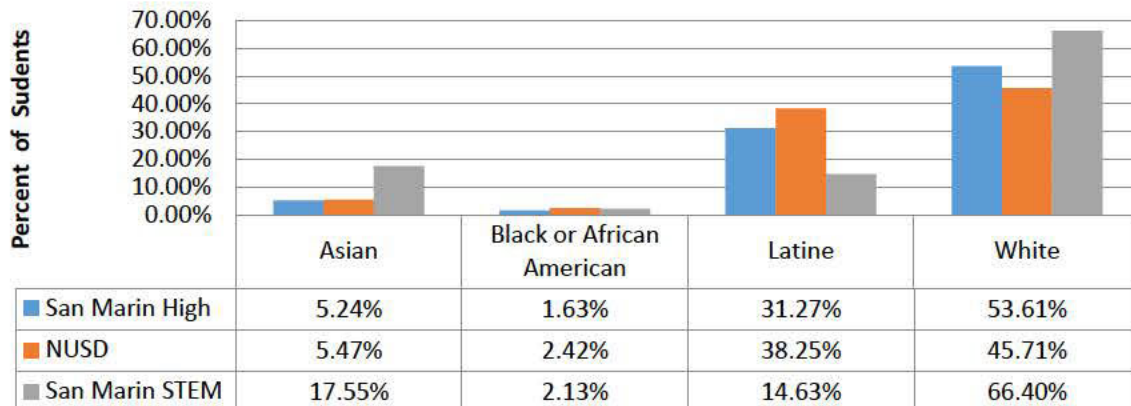
⁶ Ex. 1 at 7-8.

⁷ DataQuest, *2019-20 Enrollment by Ethnicity: Novato Unified Report*, CAL. DEP'T OF EDUC., available at: <https://data1.cde.ca.gov/dataquest/dqcensus/EnrEthLevels.aspx?cds=2165417&aggllevel=district&year=2019-20> (showing districtwide enrollment of African American students at 2.4% of total student enrollment); Ex. 1 at 8 (showing Black or African American students in grades 9-12 were 1.45% of student enrollment in the STEM Marin Program).

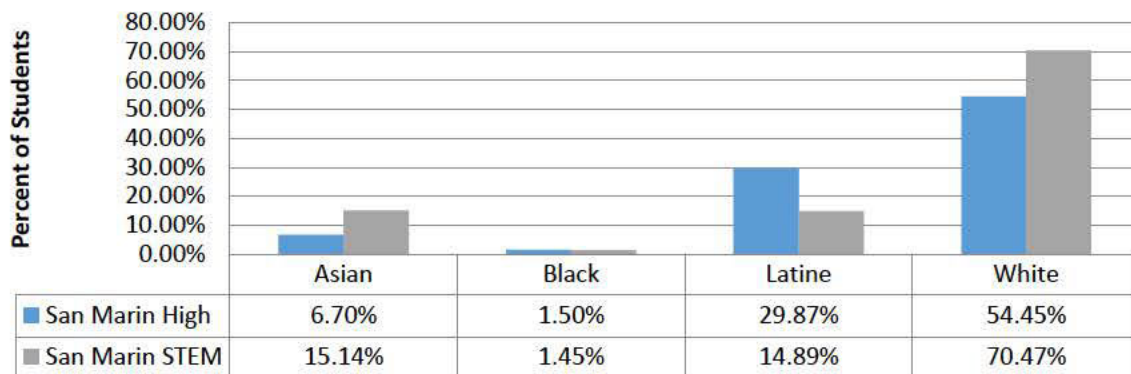
Ethnic Disparities, STEM Program Enrollment Grades 9 - 12, 2016/2017



Ethnic Disparities, STEM Program Enrollment Grades 9 - 12, 2018/2019



Ethnic Disparities, STEM Program Enrollment Grades 9 - 12, 2019/2020



Moreover, a disproportionately larger number of private school students transfer into the STEM Marin Program as compared to private school students who transfer into San Marin High School's non-STEM academic programs.⁸ Given that private schools charge tuition (usually thousands of dollars a year) while public schools do not, and students who attend private schools are generally from higher-income families, it is likely that District students from lower-income families are also disadvantaged in the STEM Marin Program admissions process. The District wholly failed to address or acknowledge this complaint allegation in its Decision.

Section III of the UCP Complaint describes the unequal allocation of District funding for the STEM Marin Program, a program that discriminates on the basis of race/ethnicity and income in admissions, while other districtwide programs such as physical education, arts education, and staff professional development on equity issues were significantly de-funded or threatened with significant de-funding in the 2020-2021 school year. The District's Decision fails to address or acknowledge this complaint.

II. The District's corrective action fails to provide a proper remedy to the allegations in the UCP Complaint.

As detailed extensively in the UCP Complaint, the facially neutral practice underlying the racial and ethnic discrimination in the STEM Marin Program described above is the admissions process, which uses vague procedures, and vague and subjective criteria untethered to STEM academics that invite racial and ethnic bias, to evaluate students for admission into the program. The District's Decision acknowledges this problem, to a very limited extent, and describes corrective action the District has taken or intends to take; nonetheless, the corrective action is insufficient to remedy the issue. Inasmuch as the District indirectly acknowledges its disparate impact discrimination by obliquely admitting in its Decision that the gender, race, and ethnic makeup of the STEM Marin Program do not reflect the student community,⁹ the District's decision fails to provide a proper remedy to the discrimination. Finally, the District's proposed corrective action fails because students will be forced to wait for another year for the limited reforms described in the District's Decision, since the District has already closed admissions into the STEM Marin Program for the 2021-2022 school year.

⁸ Ex. 1 at 8 (noting that "15% of those admitted to the STEM program as freshmen in 2020/2021 and 11% of those admitted as freshmen in 2019/2020 were from private schools...A PRA request was submitted for the number of private school students at San Marin High School in the non-STEM program. For the year 2019/2020, 2% of 9th graders were from private schools, 5% of both 10th and 11th graders...and 3% of 12th graders came from private schools.").

⁹ Ex. 2 at 2-3 ("The gender, race, and ethnic make [sic] of the program has become closer to that of the full school community as a result of these reviews.").

A. The Process by which the District Evaluates Students for Admission into the STEM Marin Program Continues to Be Vague.

The District's Decision states that it has created a new STEM Marin Program webpage that describes and clarifies the application process.¹⁰ Although some aspects of the application process have now been clarified as a result of this reform, much of the process remains unduly vague.

The STEM Marin Program webpage now states:

“[a]pplications will be reviewed by multiple sources and scored using multiple measures including scenario prompts, interview, teacher/administrator recommendation and transcripts of [the student's] time in middle school. Each response to your scenario prompts and interview will be awarded 0-3 points, with half points given as well. Our scoring is based off of our rubric which reviews the following: expressed interest in science; level of curiosity; initiative and problem solving skill set.”¹¹

Unfortunately, several aspects of this evaluation process are still unclear. The District fails to define “multiple sources” or “multiple measures,” so students do not know who will review their application and how their application will be measured beyond the 4-point scale for the “scenario prompts.” Students are not told how the interview, teacher/administrator recommendation, and transcripts are scored, nor how each of the evaluative factors are weighted in the evaluation. The new District webpage states that “past grades in math and science factor into the STEM selection process,” but does not clarify how those grades are weighted beyond that “[s]tudents must be earning a C or better by the end of the fall semester of 8th grade in order to be considered a viable candidate.”¹² Additionally, the webpage states that student interviews for admission into the STEM Marin Program “will discuss a variety of STEM Marin topics” but does not define or clarify that broad and ill-defined category.¹³

B. The STEM Marin Program Admissions Process and Subjective Criteria Invites Racial and Ethnic Bias.

A key point at which racial and ethnic bias creeps into the STEM Marin Program student admissions is at the very beginning of the process, when the District invites the applying student's eight-grade science teacher to submit comments about the student.¹⁴ As detailed in the UCP Complaint, “[a]ccording to documents received from the District [pursuant to the PRA request], if ‘a student is not recommended by their teacher, [the District] do[es] not review their application until all other applications have been reviewed.’”¹⁵ Thus, the opinion of one single teacher is given undue weight in the application process, because a single negative comment can place the student

¹⁰ Ex. 2 at 2.

¹¹ *Supra* n.1.

¹² Ex. 2 at 2.

¹³ *Supra* n.1.

¹⁴ Ex. 1 at 4.

¹⁵ *Id.*

at the end of the application line. Most alarmingly, this is also the point at which bias is allowed to infect the entire admissions process, as Ms. Reza discovered in her review of PRA documents from the District. “Negative recommendations” from a student’s middle-school science teacher often consisted of just a few words entered into a spreadsheet and reflected extremely subjective criticisms using words that reflect bias against students of color, such as “not always focused *or looking interested* in class” (emphasis added); “not motivated”; and perhaps most explicitly, a positive recommendation because the student was “a must-have minority student.”¹⁶ A teacher’s perception of whether a student “looks interested” is not only an invalid metric to determine admission into a public school academic program, but is precisely the kind of subjective perception that is most likely to be inaccurate and invalid when a white adult “interprets” a Black child’s facial expression.¹⁷

Moreover, only one criterion by which students are evaluated for admission into the STEM Marin Program is objective: that students must be earning a C or better by the end of the fall semester of eighth grade to qualify for admission. Every other admissions factor beyond that entry-level requirement is evaluated according to the reviewer’s subjective opinion about the student: teacher recommendations; student performance in the interview, which is assessed by very broadly by how the student “presents” themselves or how they “approach the question”; how the student is scored in the written “scenario prompts”; and how transcripts are scored in the aggregate. Studies consistently demonstrate that when subjective criteria are used to determine who might “succeed” or who has “promise” in school or the workplace, racial bias (particularly anti-Black racism) pervades.¹⁸

The District’s Decision notes that “every component of the application and evaluation process is completed by a panel that includes a school administrator, STEM program coordinator, a

¹⁶ *Id.*

¹⁷ Halberstadt ET AL., *Racialized Emotion Recognition Accuracy and Anger Bias of Children’s Faces*, JOURNAL OF THE AMER. PSYCH. ASS’N (2020), available at: <https://www.apa.org/pubs/journals/releases/emo-emo0000756.pdf> (finding in a study of racialized emotion recognition accuracy where 178 prospective teachers were asked to evaluate 72 children’s facial expressions that “[b]oth Black boys and Black girls were falsely seen as angry more often than White boys and White girls.”).

¹⁸ Anagha Srikanth, *Black students with identical transcripts to their peers are less likely to be recommended for AP classes: study*, CHANGING AMERICA (Feb. 4, 2021), available at: <https://thehill.com/changing-america/enrichment/education/537365-black-students-with-identical-transcripts-to-their>; Evan Soltas, *Reviewers will find more spelling errors in your writing if they think you’re black*, VOX (Apr. 21, 2014), available at: <https://www.vox.com/2014/4/21/5637068/reviewers-will-find-more-spelling-errors-in-your-writing-if-they>; Ross Brenneman, *Teacher bias devalues math skills of girls and students of color, USC research finds*, USC NEWS (Dec. 12, 2019), available at: <https://news.usc.edu/164120/teacher-bias-math-skills-girls-students-of-color/> (finding that teachers showed implicit bias toward white-sounding names when evaluating mathematical ability).

representative of the teaching staff, and a member of the Teacher Equity Team.”¹⁹ However, it is unclear from the Decision whether the practice of allowing the student’s eighth-grade teacher to submit brief comments, which can then be used to push consideration of the student’s application to the end of the line of applicants, still continues. Additionally, the District’s Decision fails to acknowledge these allegations of bias or provide a proper remedy to address the continuing harms of that bias.

C. The District Continues to Use Criteria to Evaluate Students for Admission that Are Unrelated to Skills Needed for Student Success in a STEM Program.

The District’s written component (which is described as “admissions essays” in the UCP Complaint and “short-answer scenario prompts” in the District’s Decision) does not evaluate student skills needed for success in a science or math program such as the STEM Marin Program.²⁰ The District’s Decision claims that the “intent of the written component is to gauge a student’s interest and background in the critical components of the STEM program, not to score writing ability.”²¹ However, the scoring rubric for the written component measures the depth and clarity of the student’s response to the writing prompts, and the student’s ability to clearly present persuasive evidence, both of which are writing skills.²² The written component does not measure a student’s scientific interest or aptitude and is thus unrelated to the academic skills needed for success in a STEM program. Moreover, only one of the three criteria by which students are evaluated during the admissions interview (“how do you approach the question?”) is related to student skills needed for academic success in a science or math program. The other two metrics by which student interviews are judged (“How do you present yourself?” and “Ability to compose succinct answers to questions”) measure emotional maturity, ease with strangers, and public speaking skills (including confidence to express thoughts and ideas clearly and succinctly in just a few minutes).²³ These metrics do not test scientific or analytical thinking.

Additionally, the District’s Decision does not address the assertion in the UCP Complaint that admissions essays are improperly monitored to prevent students from having others write the essay.²⁴

D. The District’s Annual Assessment of STEM Marin Program Fails to Remedy Discrimination Based on Race, Ethnicity, and Wealth in a Meaningful Way.

In response to a remedy requested in the UCP Complaint that the District collect and analyze data annually to ensure that students enrolled in the STEM Marin Program represent the community,

¹⁹ Ex. 2 at 2.

²⁰ Ex. 1 at 3.

²¹ Ex. 2 at 1.

²² Ex. 1 at 3.

²³ See *supra* n.1 (describing the interview criteria by which STEM Marin Program staff will evaluate student applicants).

²⁴ Ex. 1 at 2.

the District's Decision states that "San Marin has an annual review process that includes an analysis of its demographics, completion rates, student achievement, and post high school success. Each year, this review leads to further refinement and improvement of the program. The gender, race, and ethnic make[-up] of the program has become closer to that of the full school community as a result of these reviews."²⁵ It is unclear from this response if the "program" referred to here is the STEM Marin Program, one of the other two academic programs at San Marin High School, or San Marin High School programs in the aggregate. Moreover, the STEM Marin Program is a districtwide program, available to students in grades 9-12 across all schools in the District, and not just available to the San Marin High School community; therefore, the correct comparator population should be the "demographics, completion rates, student achievement, and post high school success" for students across the District. Regardless of – or perhaps because of – these structural deficiencies in the District's annual review process, it has thus far failed to address or provide a proper remedy to the allegations of discrimination in the UCP Complaint, because serious racial disproportionalities in admission to and enrollment in the STEM Marin Program continue up to the present day.

III. The District's Decision fails to state a conclusion regarding the allegations of the UCP Complaint.

Finally, the District's Decision haphazardly addresses portions of the UCP Complaint, responding to certain points but failing to state a conclusion or even acknowledge key allegations of the UCP Complaint, as described above.

Requested Remedies

We respectfully request that CDE require the District to take corrective action to remedy its discriminatory policies and practices in admissions to the STEM Marin Program and in resource allocation that prioritizes a greater proportion of program funds for magnet programs, including the STEM Marin Program, that discriminate against students on the basis of race, ethnicity, and wealth. Our requested corrective action includes the remedies requested in the UCP Complaint.²⁶ We respectfully request additional corrective action in light of information from the District's Decision:

- Widen the panel of District staff who evaluate each aspect of the students' applications to include evaluators who represent the racial and ethnic diversity of the Districtwide community. Studies show that Black and Latine students who have teachers who match their race or ethnicity are more likely to succeed in school, and those teachers are likely to have higher expectations for students of color.²⁷

²⁵ Ex. 2 at 2-3.

²⁶ Ex. 1 at 11-12.

²⁷ Ross Brenneman, *Teacher bias devalues math skills of girls and students of color, USC research finds*, USC NEWS (Dec. 12, 2019); Laura Meckler & Kate Rabinowitz, *America's schools are more diverse than ever. But the teachers are still mostly white.*, WASHINGTON POST (Dec. 27, 2019), available at: <https://www.washingtonpost.com/graphics/2019/local/education/teacher-diversity/>

- Ensure that every student who is not selected for admission to the STEM Marin Program, who wishes to receive feedback on their application, may request that feedback via the District website and will receive the feedback in a timely manner. Despite the District's assertion that "all students who were not selected for the program have received a letter expressing the areas that needed to be met for enrollment,"²⁸ Ms. Reza's son, who applied and was not admitted to the STEM Marin Program, never received such a letter. Feedback to students who were not admitted to the program should include the student's "scores" in each of the evaluative criteria and how those scores were weighted in the final admissions determination.
- An appeals process to a third party, such as the school board, should be developed so that students have recourse if they are not selected to the program. This is particularly essential for students whose home school is not San Marin High School (e.g., Novato High School, which has a higher percentage of Latine students), who may not have other "high quality" programs from which to choose if they are not accepted to the Districtwide STEM Marin Program.

If you have any questions, or require additional information regarding this appeal, please contact Linnea Nelson at lnelson@aclunc.org or 415-293-6383.

Sincerely,



Linnea Nelson, Education Equity Staff Attorney
Brandon Greene, Director, Racial & Economic Justice Program
ACLU Foundation of Northern California

cc: Kris Cosca, Superintendent
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(noting the Sonoma County Office of Education's efforts to create a program to train more Latine teachers and school staff).

²⁸ Ex. 2 at 2.

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Encl: Exhibit 1: Uniform Complaint Procedure Complaint from Parent Kate Reza dated December 7, 2020 (with associated Appendices 1-7).

Exhibit 2: Uniform Complaint Procedure Decision from Novato Unified School District Assistant Superintendent Jennifer Larson to Kate Reza, erroneously dated January 25, 2021.

Exhibit 3: February 10, 2021 Electronic mail from Novato Unified School District Assistant Superintendent Jennifer Larson to ACLU Attorney Linnea Nelson.

EXHIBIT 1

Superintendent Kris Cosca
Novato Unified School District
Novato, CA 94945

December 7, 2020

Re: Uniform Complaint Procedure Complaint Regarding Discrimination in San Marin High School STEM Program

Dear Superintendent Cosca,

This is a Uniform Complaint Procedure (UCP) Complaint about the San Marin High School (San Marin HS) STEM Program. There are three significant problems with the STEM program leading to racial/ethnic and other identity-based discrimination: 1) the San Marin High School STEM admissions process lacks necessary guidelines to ensure uniformity and accountability due to vague and subjective criteria that invite bias by staff making admissions decisions; 2) there are significant disparities in the ethnic/racial composition of the STEM program at San Marin HS compared to the student population at-large such that Hispanic/Latinx students are severely underrepresented in the program, indicating the vague and subjective admissions criteria has led to discrimination against this under-represented student subgroup, and 3) the situation is causing harm to underprivileged, underserved students in the Novato Unified School District (District or NUSD) in the form of unequal distribution of resources. During a time when the District has considered and enacted significant, districtwide cuts to physical education (PE), music programs, and student services that focus on equity, the STEM program appears to be fully funded. This situation must be addressed with an equity lens so that the District does not continue its discriminatory actions against Hispanic/Latinx students who are both harmed by these budget cuts and unfairly excluded from the STEM program.

Provided below is information obtained through the Public Records Act (PRA), the California Department of Education data website, and the District website which: I.) Detail the opacity, and the vague, subjective criteria of the admissions process, which serves to privilege White students from higher-income backgrounds, II.) Present the disparities in the ethnic/racial composition of the STEM program, and III.) Describe the drastic budget cuts being enacted towards a program meant to address systemic racism throughout the District, in comparison to the STEM program's funding, which, from the data provided, appears to be at the same level as previous years. Also provided is: IV.) Evidence describing my difficult experience accessing my rights under the Public Records Act due to unnecessary obstruction, submission of incomplete records, and delay by the District, which speaks to the District's unwillingness to be accountable, cooperative and transparent through its legal obligations under the California Public Records Act. Upon review of these data, it will be clear that: V.) The STEM program must develop clear, explicit and objective criteria under which each student is evaluated and a method by which to mitigate and minimize teacher bias and the advantage afforded to privileged, wealthier students including those who previously attended private schools.

I. Opaque Admissions Process with Potential for Bias

The admissions process for the STEM program at San Marin HS is opaque and leaves significant and harmful opportunity for individual bias. As confirmed through my exchange with District staff in the course of multiple PRA requests, there is no written procedure for admissions, students are left out of or elevated in consideration based on the opinion of just one of their science teachers (eight grade science teachers only), and the District at large has a documented history of discriminating against Hispanic/Latinx and African American students compared to their White counterparts.

A. *There is no written evaluation procedure and no documentation of evaluative process.*

Records received under the Public Records Act reveal a nebulous, arbitrary process by which admissions are determined. According to those records and my communications with District staff, the entire admissions process is that the STEM coordinator, Jaime Lutz, and a San Marin HS Vice Principal, Kathy Warren “meet for multiple days and together go over each student’s application responses. Where appropriate and usually if there is a difference in an applicant,” they “include Dr. Simms and Nick Williams....The conversations are verbal *and there is no documentation.*” (emphasis added) (District PRA Response, Appendix 1) The lack of clear process for evaluating admissions responses, which appear to be left to the subjective opinion of just two people without clear guidelines, is alarming and exacerbates inequities among students in those admissions decisions.

B. *The District does not give guidelines to students and parents about how students will be evaluated for admission, and admissions essays are improperly monitored to prevent students from having others write the essay.*

The main criterion by which students are evaluated is written responses to 6 questions to which the students provide responses electronically (District PRA Response, Appendix 2). As noted above, there are no clear guidelines for district and school staff to follow in evaluating responses, and there are no guidelines whatsoever for students and parents who need to understand how student responses will be evaluated for admission to the program. It is fundamentally unfair that the District does not explain to students what they need to do to be admitted to this elite program.

Moreover, according to conversations between students at the school, several students selected for the 2020/2021 STEM program claimed their essay responses were written by their parents. Students told their classmates this after learning of their acceptance (pers. comm., C. Reza, March 2020). In March 2020, when I contacted Jaime Lutz, STEM Marin Coordinator, to express my concerns that it appears parents are writing admissions essays for their students to gain acceptance into the STEM program, they responded that “our high school teachers and administrators are very capable of understanding when parent involvement is evident in a student’s writing.” (District PRA Response, Appendix 3) Despite this assertion, it seems clear that high school administrators evaluating students for admission into the STEM program are not able to properly assess and identify when a parent has written their student’s admissions essay. Relying on teacher and administrator perception to rule out cheating is neither standard nor replicable. This is particularly alarming since this is the main criterion by which students are judged for admission.

C. Essay questions favor students with experience in group learning, refined critical thinking skills, and better writing skills.

The first essay question (District PRA Response, Appendix 2) uses technical jargon: “How can Project Based Learning (PBL) help a student to be successful in school? How can it make learning more difficult? Provide examples to support your opinion.” For students who may not have heard the term, or had experience with PBL, this question may be intimidating, and for some, especially those without parent support or a strong educational background, it may be daunting enough to make them abandon the application process.

Students who have had experience with enrichment experiences or who have been exposed to a lot of PBL in school, that is, wealthier, privileged students, are going to be able to address this question from an ownership standpoint. They will have had multiple PBL experiences from which to draw to answer this question. Even if they are not as strong a science candidate, students who have already been exposed to multiple STEM programs and classes – mainly those who have had a private education – will be in a better position to respond to this question than those who are not as privileged.

Additionally, students who are gifted writers will be able to use their writing skills to help them respond to this question “with depth and examples” that “make sense and are concise,” as required. (District PRA Response, Appendix 2, Scoring Parameter for 3 points)” A better candidate for the STEM program could well be a less gifted writer who has an aptitude for science. How would a student who has a methodical, rigorous mindset or a creative, out-of-the-box personality, but little PBL or STEM experience, be able to provide an answer “with depth and examples” if they lack the writing skills and real-life experiences? It is unclear how the subjective criteria used to evaluate student writing skills is correlated to their likelihood of success in the STEM program, which is a program focused primarily on use and application of the scientific method rather than on developing persuasive writing.

Three of the remaining five questions ask the students about working in teams; again, if that experience is limited, a student’s response could be perceived as limited and score poorly, even if they would be an excellent STEM student. Again, the correlation between this admissions criteria and future student success in the STEM program is attenuated.

D. There is no clear method for combining essay scores with grades to further rank students.

The point system by which the essays are judged has a score of 18 as the highest score possible (District PRA Response, Appendix 2). Even if the essays are judged by ½ points as the STEM coordinator Jaime Lutz claimed (District PRA Response, Appendix 1), there hardly seem to be enough points available to provide a meaningful spread by which to winnow the 210 applicants down to the 120 accepted into the program. Grades are mentioned in some of the correspondence about the STEM program (District PRA Response, Appendix 4), but how the grades factor into the final decision is not specified. When decisions are being made that have such a large impact on a student’s future, there should be a standardized, written protocol that specifies how grades affect the process.

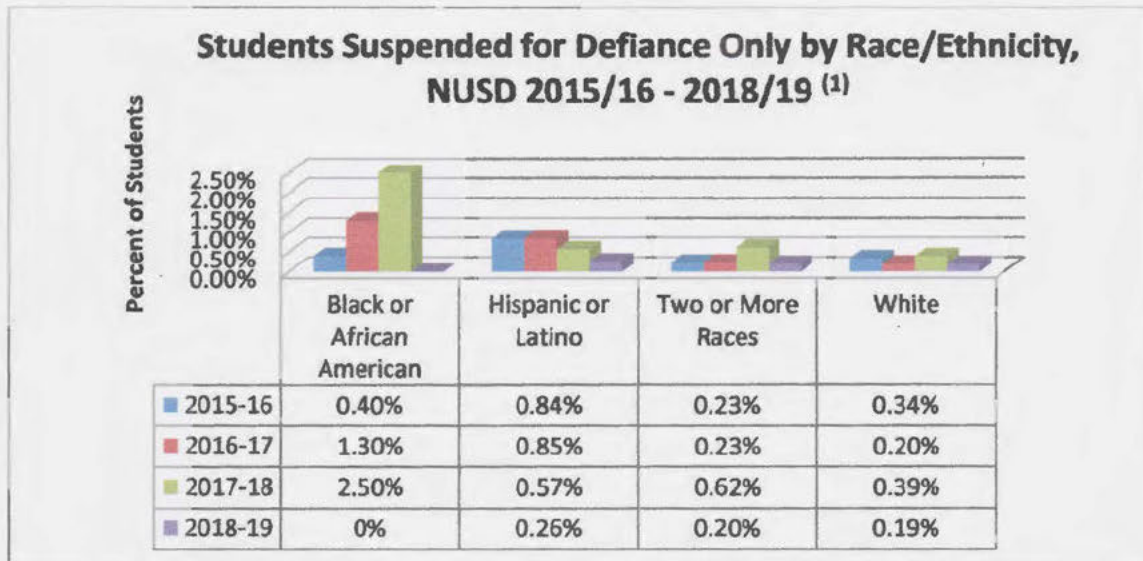
E. Students are evaluated based solely on the opinion of one teacher.

Prior to any students being considered for the STEM program, the admissions process first excludes students flagged by their eighth grade science teachers as unfit for the STEM program (District PRA Response, Appendix 5). According to documents received from the District, if “a student is not recommended by their teacher, they do not review their application until all other applications have been reviewed.” This narrows the student’s chances of acceptance into the program into an informal teacher “evaluation” consisting of a few words about that student based on their impression of the student. The 8th grade science teachers at Sinaloa made several negative comments about some of the STEM applicants: “poor work effort in class,” “not always focused *or looking interested* in class,” (emphasis added) and “not motivated” are just some examples of their judgments of their students (District PRA Response, Appendix 5). Literally, just a handful of words, not even complete sentences, can sink a student’s chance of admittance to the STEM program.

The teachers are expected to only provide reasons when they do not recommend a student; however, some teachers provided reasons for accepting a student in the STEM program. One response from Sinaloa Middle School stands out: “a must-have minority student.” It appears racial bias may be at play here, as it is unclear what makes this student a “must-have” or why their race/ethnicity enters into the admissions process in the mind of this teacher.

Reasons for not recommending a student are also nebulous: “gives up very easily,” “distracts others,” “has a lot of absences,” (District PRA Response, Appendix 5) and are quite possibly infected with racial bias when you consider the District’s history with nonviolent suspensions, as detailed below. The race/ethnicity of the students referred to these documents was not provided despite a Public Records Act request for this information, but existing statistics clearly suggest that race/ethnicity is a factor in teacher perception and their actions towards students. Take, for example, student suspension for nonviolent offenses (chart below)¹. NUSD has a history of suspending African American and Hispanic/Latinx students for nonviolent offenses at up to 5 times more than White students; in this obviously biased system, allowing the judgment of just one teacher to decisively and negatively tip the balance on a student’s future is not equitable.

¹ Source: <https://www.ed-data.org/district/Marin/Novato-Unified>; presented in graphic format for ease of presentation.



II. STEM Program Disparities

There is significant ethnic/racial disparity in the STEM program for incoming freshman in 2017/18 and 2020/21 when compared with both the NUSD at-large population and San Marin HS student population.

Incoming Freshman Statistics

For the incoming STEM freshman class in 2017/18 and 2020/21, of students who identified as Hispanic/Latinx, **only 3% at the districtwide level, and 10% on the school level**, were admitted to the STEM program. This is shocking, considering that 37% of the District's students in 2017/18 and 30% of 2020/21 incoming San Marin High School students identified as Hispanic/Latinx². One would expect in an unbiased program that Hispanic/Latinx students would be represented proportionately in the STEM program, that is, about 30 – 40% of the incoming class. But, in fact, in 2017/2018, Hispanic/Latinx students represented only 3% of the incoming class, **less than 1/10th of that expected based on the ethnic/racial distribution of the District**. 2020/2021 saw only marginal improvement, with only 10% of incoming STEM students being Hispanic/Latinx students, less than one-third of what one would expect were representation proportional. Although I requested the information under the Public Records Act, the District did not provide the 2018/2019 and 2019/20 data, leading to supposition that the statistics for these years showed admissions for Hispanic/Latinx students so low that the District would not share them. Regardless, the extreme disparity shown by the data that were provided indicates that bias is likely at play in the admissions process.

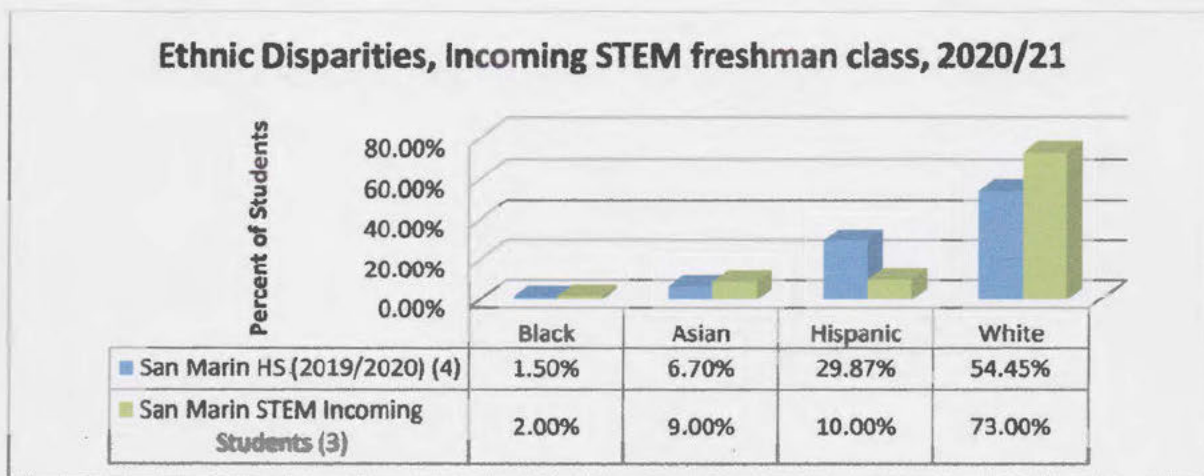
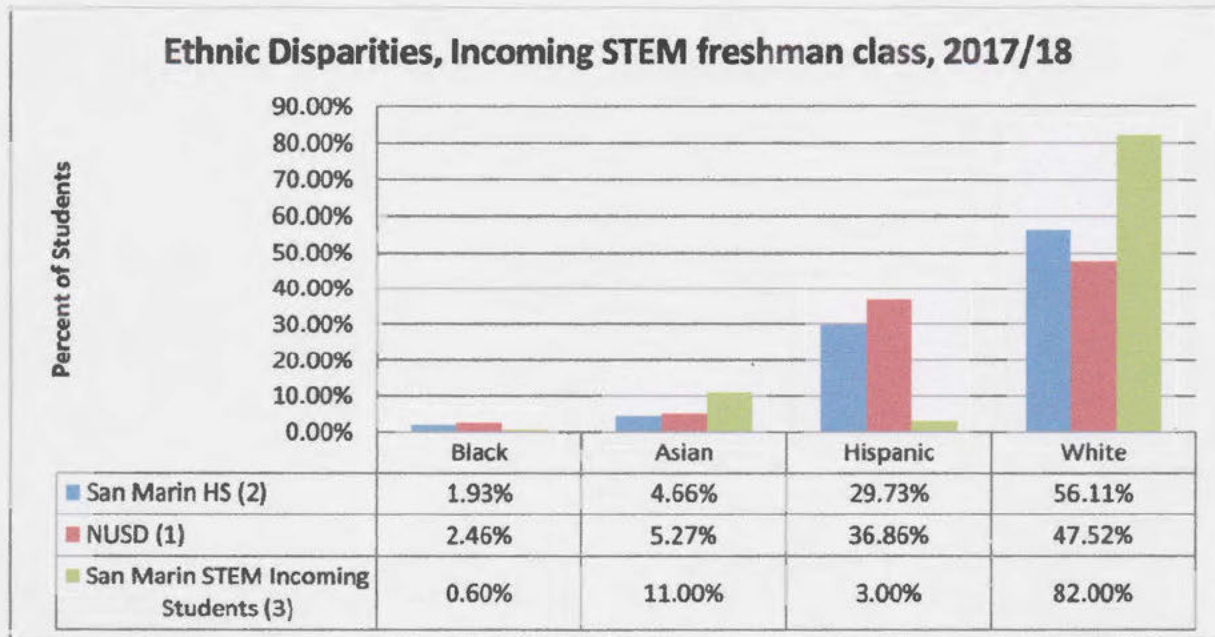
Some might claim that Hispanic/Latinx students are not applying to the program in proportional numbers; however, this is a "straw man" argument. If this is true, it highlights a reason for the problem, it doesn't absolve the District of bias and unfair treatment. The question would then become: how and

² These data were unavailable for NUSD at the writing of this letter, but the statistic for the District is likely closer to 37% in 2020/2021

(1) <https://www.ed-data.org/district/Marin/Novato-Unified>

why is the District failing Hispanic/Latinx grade and middle schoolers so that they are disproportionately under-represented among applicants to the STEM program?

The charts below clearly show the inequities under discussion.



Program Enrollment Statistics

I also requested data through a PRA request for overall enrollment in the STEM program for grades 9-12 (as opposed to admissions in 9th grade only), disaggregated by race/ethnicity. The overall enrollment data of 9-12-graders in the program are only slightly less shocking than the admissions data. The racial/ethnic data provided by the District in response to this request was not straightforward (see

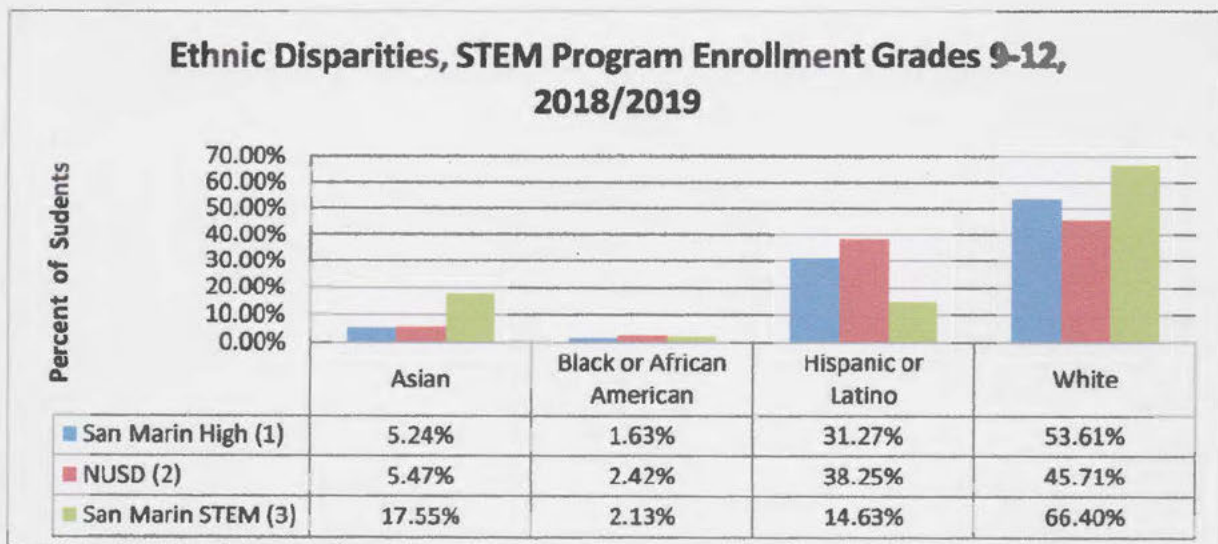
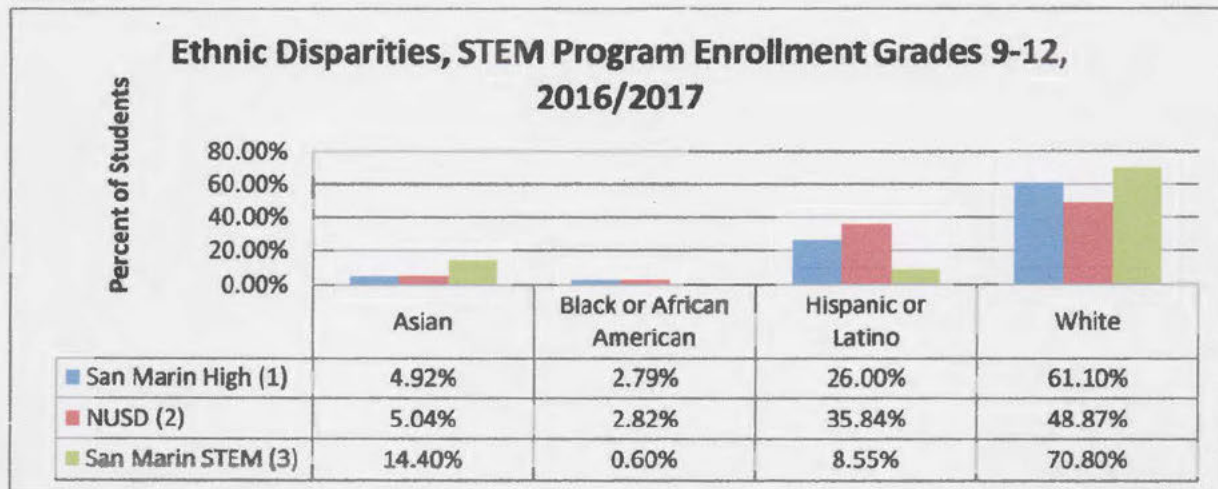
(1) <https://www.ed-data.org/district/Marin/Novato-Unified>

(2) <https://www.ed-data.org/school/Marin/Novato-Unified/San-Marin-High>

(3) NUSD supplied data under Public Records Act

(4) <https://www.schooldigger.com/go/CA/schools/2772004196/school.aspx>

Section IV, below) and required standardization prior to analysis.³ Regardless of the reason for the discrepancy, the San Marin STEM program population at large (9th – 12th grades) reflects a trend that is also disturbing: while Hispanic/Latinx students comprise around 30% of the San Marin HS and NUSD populations, they only make up at most around 15% of the STEM program, at best half of what would be expected were there proportional representation in the STEM program. Provided below are graphs for school years 2016/2017, 2018/2019, and 2019/2020. School year 2017/2018 was left out because of the poor data quality of documents provided under the Public Records Act (see Section IV, below). Despite multiple PRA requests clearly stating the variables of interest, discrepancies between the two data sets provided by the District for that school year were so great that a meaningful analysis could not be conducted.

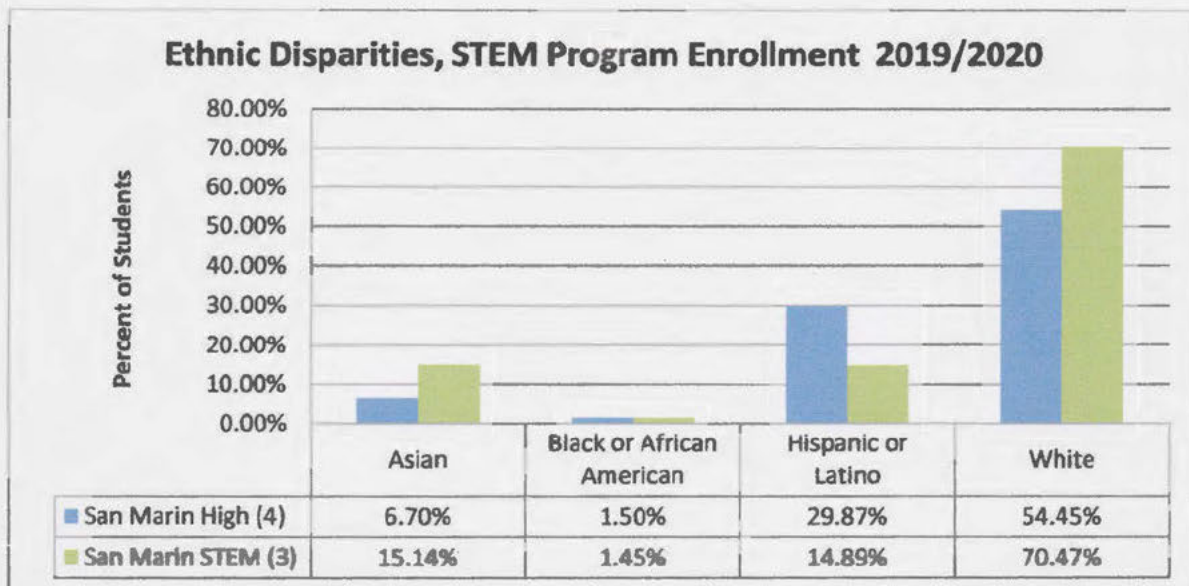


³ It was necessary to standardize data provided by NUSD to be able to compare it to publicly available NUSD population at large data. Raw data, assumptions, and calculations are available upon request. Analysis was conducted to provide "benefit of the doubt" to NUSD to avoid presenting a darker picture than actually exists.

(1) <https://www.ed-data.org/district/Marin/Novato-Unified>

(2) <https://www.ed-data.org/school/Marin/Novato-Unified/San-Marin-High>

(3) NUSD supplied data under Public Records Act



Some may try to brush these stark admissions and enrollment disparities aside by claiming that Hispanic/Latinx students are disproportionately English Learner students who are necessarily otherwise focused on programs and services designed to help them overcome language barriers. However, the publicly available data that I could find refute this argument. The California DataQuest database⁴ shows increasingly smaller numbers of English Learner students in Novato USD as they move into the upper grades. Furthermore, only about a third of Latinx students overall in the District are English Learners (comparing number of “Hispanic or Latino” students enrolled, which is 3,027, with the number of English Learner students overall in the district whose first language is Spanish, which is 1,076). This indicates that at a minimum, one fifth of the incoming STEM freshmen at San Marin HS would be Hispanic/Latinx if the numbers of English Learners were distributed evenly amongst the grade levels, which, as shown above, they are not. Only one tenth of incoming students in 2020/2021 was Hispanic/Latinx, and only 15% of students in the STEM program are Hispanic/Latinx; clearly there is something more at play here than the additional variable of English Learner status.

Economic Privilege

In addition to ethnic/racial disparity, 15% of those admitted to the STEM program as freshmen in 2020/2021 and 11% of those admitted as freshmen in 2019/2020 were from private schools. That is, the same percentage of students from private schools as that of Hispanic/Latinx students was admitted in 2020/2021 in a District where nearly 40% of the students are Hispanic/Latinx! Over 10%, that is one in ten students in the STEM program, has received a private education. A PRA request was submitted for the number of private school students at San Marin High School in the non-STEM program. For the year 2019/2020, 2% of 9th graders were from private schools, 5% of both 10th and 11th graders were from private schools, and 3% of 12th graders came from private schools, all significantly less than the 10% in the STEM program.

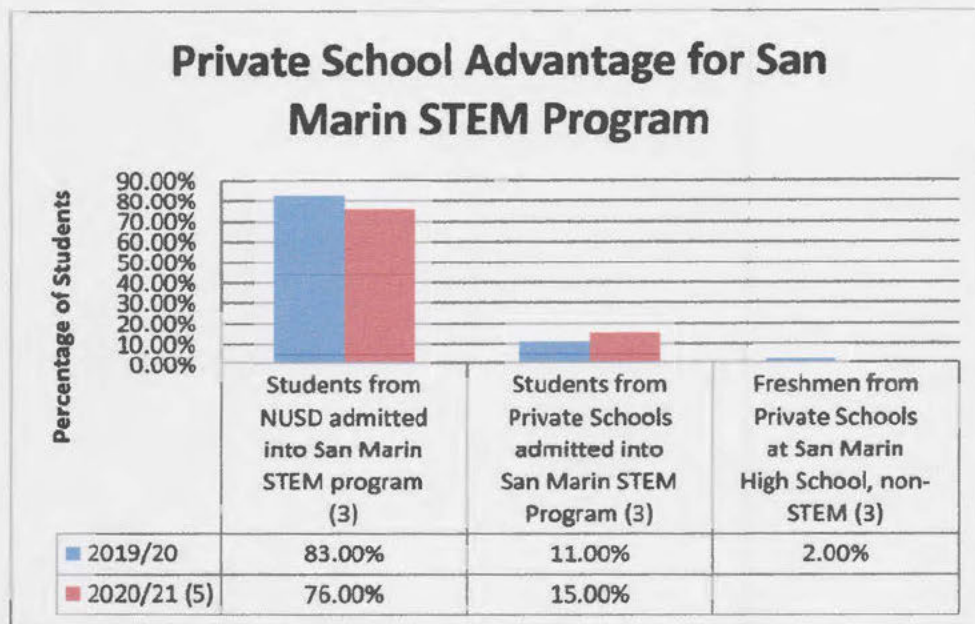
⁴<https://www.cde.ca.gov/ds/>

(3) NUSD supplied data under Public Records Act

(4) <https://www.schooldigger.com/go/CA/schools/2772004196/school.aspx>

Additionally, private school students appear to be evaluated differently during the admissions process. Although all three public middle schools' 8th grade science teachers were asked to weigh in on whether their students were worthy of the STEM program – both before and after applications were scored (District PRA Response, Appendix 5) – there are no documents showing that private school science teachers were so queried. Why are private school applicants treated differently during the admissions process?

It's inequitable for privileged students who have received the benefits of a private education to be fast-tracked on one hand and then evaluated on the same scale (essay questions that favor experiential learning) as students who have worked hard to obtain as good an education as possible at public schools.



These statistics and practices point to severe disparity in which already advantaged youth – ethnically/racially, economically, or both – are selected for the program over their less privileged peers. When combined with an Equity Overview score of 4/10 for San Marin High School from GreatSchools.org⁵ that shows a wide disparity in test scores for Hispanic students (4/10) compared with students who are White (8/10), Asian (10/10), or two or more races (10/10), the obvious conclusion is that the STEM program is operating within a system based on racial injustice and perpetuating those injustices.

III. Unequal Distribution of Resources

NUSD is facing severe budget cuts and in late spring and early summer 2020 was seriously considering cutting PE teachers, art teachers, and District staff focused on equity issues. Meanwhile, no discussion

⁵ Source: (https://www.greatschools.org/california/novato/3460-San-Marin-High-School/#Race_ethnicity*Test_scores)

(3) NUSD supplied data under Public Records Act

(5) 2020/21 data for non-STEM Freshmen from Private Schools was not provided by NUSD.

was apparent about cutting resources for the STEM program at San Marin HS. When students District-wide, including elementary and middle school, are facing cuts to their basic education, continuing to fully fund the STEM program favors an elite group of mostly White, privileged students over their less privileged, Hispanic/Latinx and non-White peers.

I sent the District a public records request for budget information on September 30 to determine the cost of the STEM program. Unfortunately, I was met with yet more obfuscation and partial responses.

In response to my PRA request, I received the benefit projection for Jaime L. Lutz, the STEM coordinator on October 12, more benefit projections for Jaime L. Lutz on October 22 along with School Fuel Field Trip information, and a final email on October 30 with more benefit projections for Jaime L. Lutz (some duplicative) and a few more field trip figures (plus duplicative field trip figures). These figures provide an incomplete picture of STEM program funding, but they do show that in the categories of field trips and FTE, the STEM program did not undergo any budget cuts (District PRA Response, Appendix 6).

Per the email I received on October 30, this was the final response to my PRA request, but the District did not provide me with readily available information about STEM program funding from the District's own web site. On the [District's web site](#), there is very pertinent STEM program budget information in the Final Revised Local Control Accountability Plan (LCAP) for 2019-20. Page 133 clearly shows that funding for the National Equity Project to "provide training and coaching services to support a targeted strategic plan to close the achievement gap with a specific focus on *increasing the participation level of sub-groups in specialized programs such as STEM, AVID, GATE...*" (emphasis added) was decreased from \$170,200 in 2017-18 to \$76,785 in 2018-19 and was completely defunded in 2019-20 (Appendix 7). Clearly, the District is not interested in equity in these programs when it removes funding meant to foster equity.

IV. Difficulty obtaining data through Public Records Act

As documented repeatedly throughout this letter, information about the STEM program was not easy to obtain. My initial inquiry was met with a spurious objection that providing socioeconomic and demographic data about the program would violate "confidentiality." When I persisted, data were provided in drips and drabs, and repeated requests were necessary to obtain the data in a useable format. For example, my initial request for racial/ethnic STEM program data was met by providing me a chart of STEM Marin Program ethnicity without the underlying data. A follow-up request to provide racial AND ethnic data for the program was met by providing the numbers of every type of Asian student, African American, Native American, Pacific Islander, and White as one data set and the program population at large divided into "Hispanic" and "Not Hispanic" in a second. This made subsequent data analysis more difficult and slightly less accurate, although I am confident, based on my professional experience as a researcher, that the trends I have described reflect what is and has been occurring with program admissions. As stated above, I did not conduct an analysis on the 2017/2018 data, which was too sloppy to even try to get a handle on. This obfuscation is clearly shown in the data and within multiple email chains between me and the District. It is partially provided as appendices within this UCP letter and I am happy to provide all correspondence in its entirety and all data analyses if desired.

V. Recommended Remedies

It is evident from the data and anecdotes I have provided that remedies are necessary to remediate the discrimination against Hispanic/Latinx students by NUSD through the admissions process to the STEM program and inequitable distribution of resources that disproportionately impact this marginalized community. To remedy the situation, I propose that:

- a. The District create clear, explicit and objective criteria by which each student is evaluated for admission to the STEM program.
 - i. Students deserve to understand how they will be evaluated and what they need to do to enter the program.
 - ii. The evaluation criteria should be formalized and the evaluation process documented and standardized so that it is fair, replicable, and transparent.
 - iii. The process by which grades are taken into account should be standardized and documented.
 - iv. Staff in middle schools and San Marin High School should be held accountable for how they are evaluating students for the STEM program so there are less opportunities for bias to creep in and more opportunities to assess students on factors that are connected to the STEM program and student potential to succeed in that program. Conversations and meetings should be documented with notes to ensure transparency and replicability throughout the evaluation process.
 - v. All students – those from both public and private schools – should be subject to the same level of scrutiny prior to and upon completion of application review.
 - vi. Staff should receive anti-bias training.
 - vii. Representatives of Hispanic/Latinx and other marginalized communities who have a STEM background should be included in the development of evaluation criteria and the evaluation process.
 - viii. The application questionnaire, if it continues to be used, should be reevaluated with respect to cultural and ethnic/racial bias and revised to ascertain students' scientific interest and aptitude rather than writing capabilities and experiences to date.
- b. After students are evaluated, students who are not selected should be able to access their scores and receive feedback on their application in order to create a learning environment that fosters student improvement.
- c. An appeals process to a third party, such as the school board, should be developed so that students have recourse if they are not selected to the program.
- d. An annual assessment of STEM program student demographics should be conducted with a rebalancing of admissions criteria if the demographics of the STEM program do not represent the community in various ways. Such data should be disaggregated by school site and student subgroup, including age, race, ethnicity,

student English Learner status, foster youth status, gender, and disability (if applicable), and whether the student has an Individualized Education Plan or section 504 Plan.

- e. STEM program funding should receive budget cuts equivalent to cuts faced by general education programs such as music and PE, and racial equity programs during times of austerity. Especially when it clearly favors privileged, over-represented groups over underprivileged, under-represented groups, the program should undergo budget cuts at the same or greater rates than programs that serve the population at large.

Novato Unified School District has an Equity Imperative Declaration that is referenced on its main page. The equity imperative in part states: *We are committed to examining and changing structures, policies, and practices that contribute to inequitable outcomes and experiences for any student.* It's time to get to work to apply these values within the San Marin HS STEM program.

Further information about this complaint and my experiences with requesting records that should be publically available and readily accessible can be obtained by contacting me at the email address:

anecologist@yahoo.com

Best regards,



Kate Reza
3501 Novato Blvd.
Novato, CA 94947

Cc: Dr. Mark Sims, Principal, San Marin HS, msims@nUSD.org

Jaime Lutz, STEM Marin Coordinator, JLUTZ@nUSD.org

Linnea Nelson, Education Equity Staff Attorney, ACLU of Northern California, lnelson@aclunc.org

Mary Jane Burke, Superintendent, Marin County Office of Education, mjburke@marinschools.org

Appendix 1: STEM Program Applicant Evaluation Procedure

Re: California Public Records Act Disclosure request (federal Freedom of Information Act)

From: LESLIE BENJAMIN (lbenjamin@nusd.org)
 To: anecologist@yahoo.com
 Date: Wednesday, June 10, 2020, 4:37 PM PDT

Hi Ms. Reza,

Below is our response to your request dated June 8, 2020.

1. The demographic data for the San Marin STEM program for the past five years (2016/17 to 2019/20 - the 19/20 data should be in a final enough form to share with the public by now). All that I received was a 5-year trend - I am requesting data for every school year between 2016/17 and 2018/19.

Attached is Ethnicity Data from 2016-2020. We won't have data for the 2020-21 school year until later in the year.

2. Not just the rubric for the written application, but the written process by which the deciders "analyzed student academic and behavior records, including attendance," and the way in which "input from students' current teachers" was solicited, obtained, and folded into the selection process.

There isn't a "written process" documenting how applications are reviewed other than the rubric provided already. Attached are emails that have been sent to teachers and administrators asking them to review the list of candidates and to fill out a Google doc with whether they would recommend a student or not and any supporting reasons. The emails are attached as 'Applicant Offers' and the Google doc is attached as 'Applicant List' and is a PDF of the Google do used with identifying names redacted.

3. The names of the people on the selection committee and the process by which they approached student selection - including any contemporaneous notes, committee agendas, or written process that describes the method(s) of selection.

Those on the primary selection committee are Jaime Lutz and Kathy Warren. Kathy and Jaime meet for multiple days and together go over each student's application responses. Where appropriate and usually if there is a difference in an applicant, we include Dr. Sims and Nick Williams. If a student is not recommended by their teacher, they do not review their application until all other applications have been reviewed. The conversations are verbal and there is no documentation.

Leslie

Leslie Benjamin
 She, Her, Hers ([Why this matters?](#))
 Director, Communications
 & Community Engagement
 Novato Unified School District
 (415) 897-4259

From: kate reza <anecologist@yahoo.com>
Sent: Monday, June 8, 2020 2:18 PM
To: LESLIE BENJAMIN <LBENJAMIN@nusd.org>
Subject: Re: California Public Records Act Disclosure request (federal Freedom of Information Act)

Hello Ms. Benjamin,
 I apologize for the lack of clarity in my earlier email.
 Please see below for what I should have requested instead:
 1. The demographic data for the San Marin STEM program for the past five years (2016/17 to 2020/21 - the 20/21 data should be in a final enough form to share with the public by now). All that I received was a 5 year trend - I am requesting data for every school year between 2016/17 and 2020/21.
 2. Not just the rubric for the written application, but the written process by which the deciders "analyzed student academic and behavior records, including attendance," and the way in which "input from students' current teachers" was solicited, obtained, and folded into the selection process. All that I received from my initial request was emails surrounding a preliminary meeting - I would like to obtain the notes from the meeting and any subsequent meetings, any documents produced for evaluation of applicants, and associated documentation that MAKES CLEAR how students were evaluated for admission to the STEM Program.
 3. The names and affiliation of all people on the selection committee

Kate Reza
 707.321.8638

On Monday, June 8, 2020, 10:09:44 AM PDT, kate reza <anecologist@yahoo.com> wrote:

Hello Ms. Benjamin,

I hope you and yours are safe and well. I have just begun to work on the data I received in May and I find that some is lacking. Will you please retrieve the following for me?

1. The demographic data for the San Marin STEM program for the past five years (2016/17 to 2019/20 - the 19/20 data should be in a final enough form to share with the public by now). All that I received was a 5 year trend - I am requesting data for every school year between 2016/17 and 2018/19.
2. Not just the rubric for the written application, but the written process by which the deciders "analyzed student academic and behavior records, including attendance," and the way in which "input from students' current teachers" was solicited, obtained, and folded into the selection process.
3. The names of the people on the selection committee and the process by which they approached student selection - including any contemporaneous notes, committee agendas, or written process that describes the method(s) of selection.

Please let me know if I have to initiate another formal request or if this will serve under state law.

Thank you,
 Kate

Kate Reza
 707.321.8638

On Friday, May 1, 2020, 12:38:45 PM PDT, kate reza <anecologist@yahoo.com> wrote:

Thank you Ms. Benjamin!

Best,
Kate

Kate Reza
707.321.8638

On Thursday, April 30, 2020, 11:22:55 AM PDT, LESLIE BENJAMIN <lbenjamin@nusd.org> wrote:

Dear Mrs. Reza,

Below is NUSD's response to your California Public Records Request dated April 22, 2020.

1. The rubric or decision-making criteria for acceptance into the 2020/2021 STEM program and STEM 2019/2020 program. [Please see Attachment 1. STEM Marin Application Rubric](#)
2. Socioeconomic and demographic data for the 120 2020/2021 students and the 2019/20 students accepted into the STEM program, including gender identity. [Socioeconomic and demographic data is not available for the years requested. However, Attachment 2. STEM Marin Data contains gender information and Attachment 3a contains four-year trend data \(%\) for Ethnicity.](#)
3. Any and all correspondence, including contemporaneous notes from phone conversations that mention me, my son Caleb Reza, or my husband Greg Reza. [See Attachment 3 and 3a Correspondence.](#)
4. The percentages of students from private schools accepted into the 2020/21 STEM program and the percentages of students from private schools enrolled non-STEM San Marin in 2020/21. [See Attachment 2 for the percentages of students from private schools enrolled in STEM Marin for the Class of 2024. This information is not available yet for students enrolled in non-STEM San Marin for the 2020-2021 school year.](#)
5. The percentages of students from private schools accepted into the 2019/20 STEM program and the percentages of students from private schools attending non-STEM San Marin in 2019/20. [See Attachment 2 for the percentages of students from private schools enrolled in STEM Marin for the Class of 2023. Below are the percentages of students from private schools attending non-STEM San Marin in 2019-2020.](#)

9th = 2%

10th = 5%

11th = 5%

12th = 3%
6. The above request (5) for the years 2016/17 & 2017/18. [The information was provided above where available.](#)
7. Any and all correspondence from parents, teachers, staff and students regarding flaws of or possible improvements to the STEM program admissions and their resolution. [According to STEM Marin, this information is not retained. However, STEM Marin provided the information below:](#)
 - a. Nick Williams surveys his 9th grade classes at the end of the year. Last year's students noted that there needed to be stricter guidelines for acceptances into the program. We remedied that by updating our application questions and review process. The survey also noted that there are disciplinary issues within the program. As a result, we have created a Code of Conduct that was shared with all students this year, including our incoming freshmen. [Please see Attachment 4 STEM Marin Code of Conduct.](#)
 - b. Prior to the beginning of our application season, Kathy, Nick, Michelle and I review the application questions and modify them based on how clear and concise the questions are, if they convey what we were looking for in an applicant and if it uses language appropriate for 8th graders. We really try to get to the core of our program values.
 - c. Postmortem conversations on what went well or what could be tweaked for next year are discussed.
 - i. As a result of last year's application process, we decided to look at creating a wait list for applicants based on parent feedback.
 - e. It was brought to my attention last year by one of our teachers that the 8th grade science teachers from San Jose and Sinaloa wanted more involvement in the application process. As a resolution, the teachers wanted to be able to provide input and recommendations on students that applied and to also encourage students that might be a good fit to apply. Overall, this was a successful addition to the process and one we will continue to use next year. [Please see Attachment 5 communication with middle schools.](#)

Please let me know if you have any questions.

Take care,

Leslie

Leslie Benjamin
She, Her, Hers
Director, Communications
& Community Engagement
Novato Unified School District
(415) 897-4259

From: LESLIE BENJAMIN <LBENJAMIN@nusd.org>
Sent: Wednesday, April 22, 2020 12:30 PM
To: kate reza <anecologist@yahoo.com>
Cc: Greg Reza <greza@marincounty.org>
Subject: Re: California Public Records Act Disclosure request (federal Freedom of Information Act)

Dear Mrs. Reza,

I am in receipt of your California Public Records Act request dated April 22, 2020. The CA Public Records Act (PRA) requires that we provide to the requester (you), within 10 days of the date a request for records is received, not the records themselves but a response that indicates whether we have disclosable records in our possession, whether any exemptions to disclosure exist and if so what those exemptions are, and then a specific date on which the records will be ready for review or copied. The PRA covers only records that already exist, and an agency cannot be required to create a record, list, or compilation.

It has been determined that a response and records for this request can be made by May 1, 2020.

If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Leslie

Leslie Benjamin
She, Her, Hers
Director, Communications
& Community Engagement
Novato Unified School District
(415) 897-4259

From: kate reza <anecologist@yahoo.com>
Sent: Wednesday, April 22, 2020 11:19 AM
To: LESLIE BENJAMIN <LBENJAMIN@nUSD.org>
Cc: Greg Reza <greza@marincounty.org>
Subject: California Public Records Act Disclosure request (federal Freedom of Information Act)

CAUTION: This email originated from outside of NUSD. Do not click links or open attachments unless you recognize the sender and know the content is safe.

Dear L. Benjamin,

I hope you and all of your loved ones are safe and very well during these difficult times.

I am contacting you to request disclosure of records from San Marin High School's STEM program regarding STEM 2020/21 program application evaluation procedures and any correspondence around the STEM program regarding me, my son Caleb Reza, or my husband Greg Reza.

Specifically, I would like access to the following documentation:

1. The rubric or decision making criteria for acceptance into the 2020/2021 STEM program and STEM 2019/2020 program.
2. Socioeconomic and demographic data for the 120 2020/2021 students and the 2019/20 students accepted into the STEM program, including gender identity.
3. Any and all correspondence, including contemporaneous notes from phone conversations that mention me, my son Caleb Reza, or my husband Greg Reza.
4. The percentages of students from private schools accepted into the 2020/21 STEM program and the percentages of students from private schools enrolled non-STEM San Marin in 2020/21.
5. The percentages of students from private schools accepted into the 2019/20 STEM program and the percentages of students from private schools attending non-STEM San Marin in 2019/20.
6. The above request (5) for the years 2016/17 & 2017/18.
7. Any and all correspondence from parents, teachers, staff and students regarding flaws of or possible improvements to the STEM program admissions and their resolution.

Thank you very much,

Kate

Kate Reza
707.321.8638

-  STEM Marin - Applicant Offers - Review Requested - Hamilton.pdf
115.9kB
-  STEM Marin - Applicant Offers - Review Requested - San Jose.pdf
118.1kB
-  STEM Marin - Applicant Offers - Review Requested - Sinaloa.pdf
116.1kB
-  STEM Marin - Ethnicity Data 2016-2020.pdf
209.6kB
-  STEM Marin Applicant List - Hamilton.pdf
46kB
-  STEM Marin Applicant List - San Jose.pdf
53.6kB
-  STEM Marin Applicant List - Sinaloa.pdf
79.1kB

RE: STEM Marin Program - San Marin High School

From: JAIME LUTZ (jlutz@nusd.org)
To: anecologist@yahoo.com; onefrostyboi@yahoo.com; grezas11@outlook.com
Date: Monday, March 2, 2020, 1:04 PM PST

Hi Kate:

Thanks for the email. Hopefully I can address some of your questions.

We are very fortunate this year to have an unusually strong applicant pool. We had 210 applicants this year from both private and public schools as well as many outside of the district. We have 120 seats to fill this upcoming fall (60 STEM and 60 Biotech), which ultimately means that we cannot accept everyone.

Applications were reviewed by multiple sources and scored using multiple measures. Our rubric gave 1-3 points per response, and half points were awarded as well. We were looking for responses that were well articulated but authentic and concise but answered completely. We did not penalize a student for proofreading errors. We also analyzed student academic and behavior records, including attendance. And finally, we got input from students' current teachers and administrators.

As we receive acceptances and declines to the program, we will notify the wait list applicants on that rolling basis. Current students with acceptance letters will have until today to confirm their acceptance. Once we have numbers there, we will start sending out acceptances to wait list applicants starting sometime in the next few weeks. We expect that more applicants will drop as other programs and schools send out their notifications in the spring including many of the private schools.

Once all seats are confirmed and filled, we will send final communication to any applicants still on the wait list. Final communication should come in early May.

In terms of his next steps, counselors will be coming to the middle schools to talk with students about their interests and starting planning their classes for their freshmen year. It will be great for your Caleb to talk with them at this time to help him figure out what his options are, should he not get into the STEM Marin program.

Let me know if you have any questions and thanks for your patience as we work out our wait list process.

Jaime Lutz



STEM Marin Coordinator

San Marin High School

15 San Marin Drive

Novato, CA 94945

415.798.5194

STEMMarin.org

From: kate reza <anecologist@yahoo.com>
Sent: Monday, March 2, 2020 12:29 PM
To: Caleb Reza <onefrostyboi@yahoo.com>; JAIME LUTZ <JLUTZ@nusd.org>; Greg Reza <grezas11@outlook.com>
Subject: Re: STEM Marin Program - San Marin High School

Dear Ms. Lutz,

Caleb is extremely disappointed not have been accepted. We do not understand the criteria, why he was not accepted, or his current options, given his intention for a career in science and technology.

Would it be possible to meet with someone to discuss how he can still prepare himself for entry into a good college that has strong math, science, programming, and engineering programs?

We would also like to learn where on the wait list he is so that we can evaluate his schooling options.

Thank you,

Kate

Kate Reza
707.321.8638

On Friday, February 28, 2020, 07:37:30 AM PST, Caleb Reza <onefrostyboi@yahoo.com> wrote:

Sent from my iPhone

Begin forwarded message:

From: JAIME LUTZ <JLUTZ@nusd.org>
Date: February 3, 2020 at 1:47:02 PM PST
To: MARK SIMS <MSims@nusd.org>, KATHERINE WARREN <KWARREN@nusd.org>, JAIME LUTZ <JLUTZ@nusd.org>
Subject: STEM Marin Program - San Marin High School

Dear STEM Marin Applicant,

Thank you for your interest in the STEM Marin program. Our program is at capacity for the 2020-2021 school year and you have been placed on a wait list. Please review the attached letter for information and let me know if you have any questions.

Jaime Lutz

*STEM Marin Coordinator
San Marin High School
15 San Marin Drive
Novato, CA 94945
415.798.5194
STEMMarin.org*

Appendix 2: STEM Program Application Questions/ Rubric

| Scoring | 0 | 1 | 2 | 3 |
|--|------------------------------------|--|---|--|
| Parameters Highest Score Possible: 18 | Didn't answer the question at all. | Briefly answers questions without providing examples or depth. | Answers question with depth but supporting evidence is minimal. | Answers question with depth and examples make sense and are concise. |
| Questions | | | | |
| How can Project Based Learning (PBL) help a student to be successful in school? How can it make learning more difficult? Provide examples to support your opinion. | | | | |
| Give an example of when working in groups/teams went really well for you. What did you learn from this experience? | | | | |
| Give an example of when working in groups/teams was more challenging. What did you learn from this experience? | | | | |
| What strengths do you have as a student that will help your group/team be successful? Give examples. | | | | |
| How does working hard relate to difficult assignments? | | | | |
| What qualities does a person need in order to support a good work ethic? Give an example of how you have shown these qualities in one of your classes. | | | | |
| STEM Marin is a four-year commitment. Explain why you are choosing to be part of the STEM or Biotech programs. | | | | |

Appendix 3: Parental Involvement in Essay Responses – Response from STEM Program staff

RE: STEM Marin Program - San Marin High School

From: JAIME LUTZ (jlutz@nUSD.org)
 To: anecologist@yahoo.com; msims@nUSD.org; jhu@nUSD.org
 Cc: kwarren@nUSD.org
 Date: Thursday, April 16, 2020, 7:36 PM PDT

Hi Kate:

Thanks for the email and I hope your family is staying safe and healthy as well.

I appreciate you taking the time to follow up on Caleb's application and I hope I can address some of your questions.

During our waitlist period, we were not providing parents or students with their place on the list. It's not part of our program policy and we did not want to get student's hopes up if they didn't make it in the program.

We are aware that parents may write or strongly influence a student's application and deduct points as necessary. In reading applications, our high school teachers and administrators are very capable of understanding when parent involvement is evident in a student's writing.

In terms of our rubric, I mentioned in my previous email that we scored applications on a 1-3-point system. We looked at responses that were answered completely and concisely. If students were able to show critical thinking and were authentic in their writing, higher points were awarded. We also awarded half points and did not penalize students for spelling or punctuation errors.

Our partnerships with the middle schools is constantly growing and improving. As part of the whole application package, we review the input of the student's current science teachers and middle school administrators.

I would offer as an option the fact that many of our students who have a passion for science simply choose to take additional science classes. All of our STEM Marin teachers also teach traditional science classes as well as our AP Science classes which are open to all students. I would highly recommend that Caleb speak to his counselor about this option that essentially allows students a greater level of flexibility to "try out" many new experiences in addition to science.

Best,

Jaime

Jaime Lutz



STEM Marin Coordinator
 San Marin High School
 15 San Marin Drive
 Novato, CA 94945
 415.798.5194
STEMMarin.org

From: kate reza <anecologist@yahoo.com>
Sent: Thursday, April 16, 2020 4:59 PM
To: JAIME LUTZ <JLUTZ@nUSD.org>; MARK SIMS <MSims@nUSD.org>; JIM HU <JHU@nUSD.org>
Subject: Fw: STEM Marin Program - San Marin High School

Hello Jaime,

I hope you and your loved ones are safe and well.

I am dismayed that you have not responded to my March 2 query about the STEM program, my son Caleb's place on the wait list, and my other concerns about the application process.

I believe that the rubric by which decisions are made should be public and accessible to anyone who requests it. Again: I would like a copy of the rubric by which admissions to the San Marin STEM program are judged.

One thing in your standard response letter stuck out to me: which teachers were queried about his appropriateness for the STEM program? If you asked only Caleb's 8th grade science teacher, I am positive that her (likely negative) response would differ greatly from both his 6th and 7th grade science teachers. Please tell me: which teachers were asked?

Caleb does best in class when he's doing project based learning that is technically focused, that is why the STEM program is perfect for him. He's a team player, has a unique perspective, and loves to help other students understand math and technical concepts, that is why he would be perfect for the STEM program.

He does not excel at expressing himself, which seems like what was looked for in the essay questions. We certainly don't want Caleb to be favored over other students simply because he has parents who get involved in his education. We also don't want other students favored over Caleb because they have parents who will write their students' essays for them. How did you determine whether a students' responses originated from them?

I'm honestly not sure why my previous email did not merit a response. Please do me and Caleb the courtesy of a thoughtful, personalized response to this one.

Best regards,

Kate

Kate Reza
707.321.8638

----- Forwarded Message -----

From: kate reza <anecologist@yahoo.com>

To: JAIME LUTZ <jlutz@nUSD.org>

Sent: Monday, March 2, 2020, 2:09:03 PM PST

Subject: Re: STEM Marin Program - San Marin High School

Thank you. Where is Caleb on the wait list? Are you aware that many parents wrote the application? That is what Caleb heard from his peers who were applying.

Thank you,

Kate

Kate Reza
707.321.8638

On Monday, March 2, 2020, 01:04:57 PM PST, JAIME LUTZ <jlutz@nUSD.org> wrote:

Hi Kate:

Thanks for the email. Hopefully I can address some of your questions.

We are very fortunate this year to have an unusually strong applicant pool. We had 210 applicants this year from both private and public schools as well as many outside of the district. We have 120 seats to fill this upcoming fall (60 STEM and 60 Biotech), which ultimately means that we cannot accept everyone.

Applications were reviewed by multiple sources and scored using multiple measures. Our rubric gave 1-3 points per response, and half points were awarded as well. We were looking for responses that were well articulated but authentic and concise but answered completely. We did not penalize a student for proofreading errors. We also analyzed student academic and behavior records, including attendance. And finally, we got input from students' current teachers and administrators.

As we receive acceptances and declines to the program, we will notify the wait list applicants on that rolling basis. Current students with acceptance letters will have until today to confirm their acceptance. Once we have numbers there, we will start sending out acceptances to wait list applicants starting sometime in the next few weeks. We expect that more applicants will drop as other programs and schools send out their notifications in the spring including many of the private schools.

Once all seats are confirmed and filled, we will send final communication to any applicants still on the wait list. Final communication should come in early May.

In terms of his next steps, counselors will be coming to the middle schools to talk with students about their interests and starting planning their classes for their freshmen year. It will be great for your Caleb to talk with them at this time to help him figure out what his options are, should he not get into the STEM Marin program.

Let me know if you have any questions and thanks for your patience as we work out our wait list process.

Jaime Lutz



STEM Marin Coordinator

San Marin High School

15 San Marin Drive

Novato, CA 94945

415.798.5194

STEMMarin.org

From: kate reza <anecologist@yahoo.com>

Sent: Monday, March 2, 2020 12:29 PM

To: Caleb Reza <onefrostyboi@yahoo.com>; JAIME LUTZ <JLUTZ@nusd.org>; Greg Reza <grezas11@outlook.com>

Subject: Re: STEM Marin Program - San Marin High School

Dear Ms. Lutz.

Caleb is extremely disappointed not have been accepted. We do not understand the criteria, why he was not accepted, or his current options, given his intention for a career in science and technology.

Would it be possible to meet with someone to discuss how he can still prepare himself for entry into a good college that has strong math, science, programming, and engineering programs?

We would also like to learn where on the wait list he is so that we can evaluate his schooling options.

Thank you,

Kate

Kate Reza

707.321.8638

On Friday, February 28, 2020, 07:37:30 AM PST, Caleb Reza <onefrostyboi@yahoo.com> wrote:

Sent from my iPhone

Begin forwarded message:

From: JAIME LUTZ <JLUTZ@nusd.org in>

Date: February 3, 2020 at 1:47:02 PM PST

To: MARK SIMS <MSims@nusd.org>, KATHERINE WARREN <KWARREN@nusd.org>, JAIME LUTZ <JLUTZ@nusd.org>

Subject: STEM Marin Program - San Marin High School

Dear STEM Marin Applicant,

Thank you for your interest in the STEM Marin program. Our program is at capacity for the 2020-2021 school year and you have been placed on a wait list. Please review the attached letter for information and let me know if you have any questions.

Jaime Lutz

STEM Marin Coordinator

San Marin High School

15 San Marin Drive

Novato, CA 94945

415.798.5194

STEMMarin.org

Appendix 4: Process for Inclusion of Grades in Applicant Evaluation

From: [JAIME LUTZ](#)
To: [MARK SIMS](#)
Cc: [KATHERINE WARREN](#)
Subject: RE: STEM Marin Program - San Marin High School
Date: Monday, April 20, 2020 10:26:10 AM
Attachments: [image003.png](#)
[image004.png](#)
[image005.png](#)

Thanks Mark.

We do not use CAASPP scores to determine placement in the program and to my knowledge we never have. We do look at transcripts/GPA but the first year I was part of the application process, Diane mentioned that grades were not the final decision maker. She was more concerned with behavior.

I'm following up with Amy and Laura on the information on how many students outside of the district we take and other socioeconomic information. I have that information only for this year and last year on the number of students from outside the district, which I will add to my data sheet.

Jaime

Jaime Lutz



STEM Marin Coordinator
San Marin High School
15 San Marin Drive
Novato, CA 94945
415.798.5194
STEMMarin.org

From: MARK SIMS <MSims@nUSD.org>
Sent: Monday, April 20, 2020 10:15 AM
To: JAIME LUTZ <JLUTZ@nUSD.org>
Cc: KATHERINE WARREN <KWARREN@nUSD.org>
Subject: Re: STEM Marin Program - San Marin High School

I haven't sent anything yet. I need to follow up with the other parent regarding socio-econ and out of NUSD students accepted. Have we used CAASPP, GPA, etc. . . . for determining placement?

Diane always handled this so I am not sure what all the factors are in determining who is on and out. Anything further as the parent is helpful as they, I believe will take this beyond me. I

do need to provide all the above info first.

Mark Sims, Ed.D
Principal
San Marin HS

From: JAIME LUTZ <JLUTZ@nUSD.org>
Sent: Monday, April 20, 2020 8:56 AM
To: MARK SIMS <MSims@nUSD.org>
Cc: KATHERINE WARREN <KWARREN@nUSD.org>
Subject: FW: STEM Marin Program - San Marin High School

Hi Mark:

Happy Monday! I'm hoping to follow back up with this parent today as soon as I have the socioeconomic information from Amy and Laura.

I wanted to just double check that you haven't sent anything before responding?

Thanks!

Jaime Lutz



*STEM Marin Coordinator
San Marin High School
15 San Marin Drive
Novato, CA 94945
415.798.5194
STEMMarin.org*

From: kate reza <anecologist@yahoo.com>
Sent: Friday, April 17, 2020 10:24 AM
To: MARK SIMS <MSims@nUSD.org>; JIM HU <JHU@nUSD.org>; JAIME LUTZ <JLUTZ@nUSD.org>
Cc: KATHERINE WARREN <KWARREN@nUSD.org>; Caleb Reza <onefrostyboi@yahoo.com>; grezas11@outlook.com
Subject: Re: STEM Marin Program - San Marin High School

Hello Jaime,

I am not understanding the rubric - a one to three point system based on what? What are the actual categories being assigned a value of 1 to 3 by half points? May I please have a copy of the rubric?

Appendix 5: Science Teacher Input into Student Evaluation

Re: California Public Records Act Disclosure request (federal Freedom of Information Act)

From: LESLIE BENJAMIN (lbenjamin@nusd.org)
To: anecologist@yahoo.com
Date: Wednesday, June 10, 2020, 4:37 PM PDT

Hi Ms. Reza,

Below is our response to your request dated June 8, 2020.

1. The demographic data for the San Marin STEM program for the past five years (2016/17 to 2019/20 - the 19/20 data should be in a final enough form to share with the public by now). All that I received was a 5-year trend - I am requesting data for every school year between 2016/17 and 2018/19.

Attached is Ethnicity Data from 2016-2020. We won't have data for the 2020-21 school year until later in the year.

2. Not just the rubric for the written application, but the written process by which the deciders "analyzed student academic and behavior records, including attendance," and the way in which "input from students' current teachers" was solicited, obtained, and folded into the selection process.

There isn't a "written process" documenting how applications are reviewed other than the rubric provided already. Attached are emails that have been sent to teachers and administrators asking them to review the list of candidates and to fill out a Google doc with whether they would recommend a student or not and any supporting reasons. The emails are attached as 'Applicant Offers' and the Google doc is attached as 'Applicant List' and is a PDF of the Google do used with identifying names redacted.

3. The names of the people on the selection committee and the process by which they approached student selection - including any contemporaneous notes, committee agendas, or written process that describes the method(s) of selection.

Those on the primary selection committee are Jaime Lutz and Kathy Warren. Kathy and Jaime meet for multiple days and together go over each student's application responses. Where appropriate and usually if there is a difference in an applicant, we include Dr. Sims and Nick Williams. If a student is not recommended by their teacher, they do not review their application until all other applications have been reviewed. The conversations are verbal and there is no documentation.

Leslie

Leslie Benjamin
She, Her, Hers ([Why this matters?](#))
Director, Communications
& Community Engagement
Novato Unified School District
(415) 897-4259

From: kate reza <anecologist@yahoo.com>
Sent: Monday, June 8, 2020 2:18 PM
To: LESLIE BENJAMIN <LBENJAMIN@nusd.org>
Subject: Re: California Public Records Act Disclosure request (federal Freedom of Information Act)

Hello Ms. Benjamin,
I apologize for the lack of clarity in my earlier email.
Please see below for what I should have requested instead:

1. The demographic data for the San Marin STEM program for the past five years (2016/17 to 2020/21 - the 20/21 data should be in a final enough form to share with the public by now). All that I received was a 5 year trend - I am requesting data for every school year between 2016/17 and 2020/21.
2. Not just the rubric for the written application, but the written process by which the deciders "analyzed student academic and behavior records, including attendance," and the way in which "input from students' current teachers" was solicited, obtained, and folded into the selection process. All that I received from my initial request was emails surrounding a preliminary meeting - I would like to obtain the notes from the meeting and any subsequent meetings, any documents produced for evaluation of applicants, and associated documentation that MAKES CLEAR how students were evaluated for admission to the STEM Program.
3. The names and affiliation of all people on the selection committee

Kate Reza
707.321.8638

On Monday, June 8, 2020, 10:09:44 AM PDT, kate reza <anecologist@yahoo.com> wrote:

Hello Ms. Benjamin,

I hope you and yours are safe and well. I have just begun to work on the data I received in May and I find that some is lacking. Will you please retrieve the following for me?

1. The demographic data for the San Marin STEM program for the past five years (2016/17 to 2019/20 - the 19/20 data should be in a final enough form to share with the public by now). All that I received was a 5 year trend - I am requesting data for every school year between 2016/17 and 2018/19.
2. Not just the rubric for the written application, but the written process by which the deciders "analyzed student academic and behavior records, including attendance," and the way in which "input from students' current teachers" was solicited, obtained, and folded into the selection process.
3. The names of the people on the selection committee and the process by which they approached student selection - including any contemporaneous notes, committee agendas, or written process that describes the method(s) of selection.

Please let me know if I have to initiate another formal request or if this will serve under state law.

Thank you,
Kate

Kate Reza
707.321.8638

On Friday, May 1, 2020, 12:38:45 PM PDT, kate reza <anecologist@yahoo.com> wrote:

Thank you Ms. Benjamin!

Best,
Kate

Kate Reza
707.321.8638

On Thursday, April 30, 2020, 11:22:55 AM PDT, LESLIE BENJAMIN <lbenjamin@nusd.org> wrote:

Dear Mrs. Reza,

Below is NUSD's response to your California Public Records Request dated April 22, 2020.

1. The rubric or decision-making criteria for acceptance into the 2020/2021 STEM program and STEM 2019/2020 program. [Please see Attachment 1. STEM Marin Application Rubric](#)
2. Socioeconomic and demographic data for the 120 2020/2021 students and the 2019/20 students accepted into the STEM program, including gender identity. [Socioeconomic and demographic data is not available for the years requested. However, Attachment 2. STEM Marin Data contains gender information and Attachment 3a contains four-year trend data \(%\) for Ethnicity.](#)
3. Any and all correspondence, including contemporaneous notes from phone conversations that mention me, my son Caleb Reza, or my husband Greg Reza. [See Attachment 3 and 3a Correspondence.](#)
4. The percentages of students from private schools accepted into the 2020/21 STEM program and the percentages of students from private schools enrolled non-STEM San Marin in 2020/21. [See Attachment 2 for the percentages of students from private schools enrolled in STEM Marin for the Class of 2024. This information is not available yet for students enrolled in non-STEM San Marin for the 2020-2021 school year.](#)
5. The percentages of students from private schools accepted into the 2019/20 STEM program and the percentages of students from private schools attending non-STEM San Marin in 2019/20. [See Attachment 2 for the percentages of students from private schools enrolled in STEM Marin for the Class of 2023. Below are the percentages of students from private schools attending non-STEM San Marin in 2019-2020.](#)

9th = 2%

10th = 5%

11th = 5%

12th = 3%
6. The above request (5) for the years 2016/17 & 2017/18. [The information was provided above where available.](#)
7. Any and all correspondence from parents, teachers, staff and students regarding flaws of or possible improvements to the STEM program admissions and their resolution. [According to STEM Marin, this information is not retained. However, STEM Marin provided the information below:](#)
 - a. Nick Williams surveys his 9th grade classes at the end of the year. Last year's students noted that there needed to be stricter guidelines for acceptances into the program. We remedied that by updating our application questions and review process. The survey also noted that there are disciplinary issues within the program. As a result, we have created a Code of Conduct that was shared with all students this year, including our incoming freshmen. [Please see Attachment 4 STEM Marin Code of Conduct.](#)
 - b. Prior to the beginning of our application season, Kathy, Nick, Michelle and I review the application questions and modify them based on how clear and concise the questions are, if they convey what we were looking for in an applicant and if it uses language appropriate for 8th graders. We really try to get to the core of our program values.
 - c. Postmortem conversations on what went well or what could be tweaked for next year are discussed.
 - i. As a result of last year's application process, we decided to look at creating a wait list for applicants based on parent feedback.
 - e. It was brought to my attention last year by one of our teachers that the 8th grade science teachers from San Jose and Sinaloa wanted more involvement in the application process. As a resolution, the teachers wanted to be able to provide input and recommendations on students that applied and to also encourage students that might be a good fit to apply. Overall, this was a successful addition to the process and one we will continue to use next year. [Please see Attachment 5 communication with middle schools.](#)

Please let me know if you have any questions.

Take care,

Leslie

Leslie Benjamin
She, Her, Hers
Director, Communications
& Community Engagement
Novato Unified School District
(415) 897-4259

From: LESLIE BENJAMIN <LBENJAMIN@nusd.org>
Sent: Wednesday, April 22, 2020 12:30 PM
To: kate reza <anecologist@yahoo.com>
Cc: Greg Reza <greza@marincounty.org>
Subject: Re: California Public Records Act Disclosure request (federal Freedom of Information Act)

Dear Mrs. Reza,

I am in receipt of your California Public Records Act request dated April 22, 2020. The CA Public Records Act (PRA) requires that we provide to the requester (you), within 10 days of the date a request for records is received, not the records themselves but a response that indicates whether we have disclosable records in our possession, whether any exemptions to disclosure exist and if so what those exemptions are, and then a specific date on which the records will be ready for review or copied. The PRA covers only records that already exist, and an agency cannot be required to create a record, list, or compilation.

It has been determined that a response and records for this request can be made by May 1, 2020.

If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Leslie

Leslie Benjamin
She, Her, Hers
Director, Communications
& Community Engagement
Novato Unified School District
(415) 897-4259

From: kate reza <anecologist@yahoo.com>
Sent: Wednesday, April 22, 2020 11:19 AM
To: LESLIE BENJAMIN <LBENJAMIN@nUSD.org>
Cc: Greg Reza <greza@marincounty.org>
Subject: California Public Records Act Disclosure request (federal Freedom of Information Act)

CAUTION: This email originated from outside of NUSD. Do not click links or open attachments unless you recognize the sender and know the content is safe.

Dear L. Benjamin,

I hope you and all of your loved ones are safe and very well during these difficult times.

I am contacting you to request disclosure of records from San Marin High School's STEM program regarding STEM 2020/21 program application evaluation procedures and any correspondence around the STEM program regarding me, my son Caleb Reza, or my husband Greg Reza.

Specifically, I would like access to the following documentation:


1. The rubric or decision making criteria for acceptance into the 2020/2021 STEM program and STEM 2019/2020 program.
2. Socioeconomic and demographic data for the 120 2020/2021 students and the 2019/20 students accepted into the STEM program, including gender identity.
3. Any and all correspondence, including contemporaneous notes from phone conversations that mention me, my son Caleb Reza, or my husband Greg Reza.
4. The percentages of students from private schools accepted into the 2020/21 STEM program and the percentages of students from private schools enrolled non-STEM San Marin in 2020/21.
5. The percentages of students from private schools accepted into the 2019/20 STEM program and the percentages of students from private schools attending non-STEM San Marin in 2019/20.
6. The above request (5) for the years 2016/17 & 2017/18.
7. Any and all correspondence from parents, teachers, staff and students regarding flaws of or possible improvements to the STEM program admissions and their resolution.

Thank you very much,

Kate

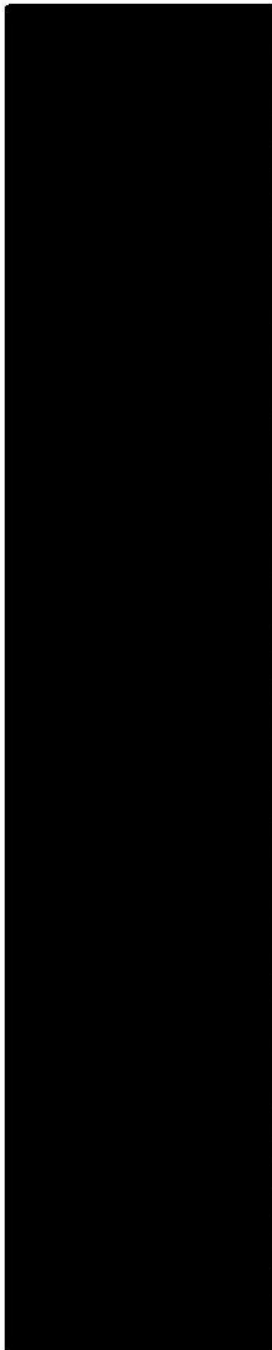
Kate Reza
707.321.8638

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-  STEM Marin Applicant List - Sinaloa.pdf
79.1kB

| | | | | |
|---|----|----|-----|--|
|  | No | No | Yes | |
| | No | No | Yes | |
| | No | No | Yes | |
| | No | No | Yes | |
| | | | | |
| | | | | |
| | No | No | Yes | |

| First Name | Last Name | SES | EL Student | Redesignated (last 12 months) | Recommend? | If no, please explain |
|------------|-----------|-----|------------|----------------------------------|------------|--|
| | | | No | Yes | Yes | It is actually a Maybe, on the part of the science teacher (due to work ethic when the school work is difficult and gaps in math skills) |
| | | | Yes | No | Yes | It is actually a Maybe, on the part of the science teacher (due to work ethic when the school work is difficult and gaps in math skills) |
| | | | No | Yes | Yes | |
| | | | Yes | No | Yes | |

| First Name | Last Name | SES | EL Student | Redesignated (last 12 months) | Recommend? | If no, please explain | | | | | | |
|------------|-----------|-----|------------|----------------------------------|------------|---|--|--|--|--|--|--|
| | | | | | Yes | Amazing Leader | | | | | | |
| | | | | | Yes | Amazing | | | | | | |
| | | | | | | Not a Sinaloa student | | | | | | |
| | | | | | Yes | | | | | | | |
| | | | | | No | Has lots of absences and doesn't make up her work | | | | | | |
| | | | | | Yes | ***Awesome | | | | | | |
| | | | | | Yes | Amazing | | | | | | |
| | | | | | Yes | | | | | | | |
| | | | | | Yes | | | | | | | |
| | | | | | Yes | ***AWESOME | | | | | | |
| | | | | | Yes | ***AWESOME | | | | | | |
| | | | | | Yes | | | | | | | |
| | | | | | Yes | *** | | | | | | |
| | | | | | Yes | | | | | | | |
| | | | | | Yes | | | | | | | |
| | | | | | Yes | *** | | | | | | |
| | | | | | Yes | *Attentive student. Tries incredibly hard to overcome learning differences and regularly takes opportunities to improve work. | | | | | | |
| | | | | | No | Poor work effort in class and quite often disruptive | | | | | | |
| | | | | | Yes | *** | | | | | | |
| | | | | | Yes | *** | | | | | | |
| | | | | | Yes | * | | | | | | |
| | | | | | Yes | | | | | | | |
| | | | | | Yes | Maybe. Not always focused or looking interested in class. | | | | | | |
| | | | | | Yes | ** Strong skills in self assesement and uses rubrics well to independantly determine if learning goals have been achieved. | | | | | | |
| | | | | | Yes | | | | | | | |
| | | | | | Yes | | | | | | | |
| | | | | | Yes | | | | | | | |
| | | | | | Yes | *** | | | | | | |
| | | | | | Yes | | | | | | | |
| | | | | | Yes | *** | | | | | | |
| | | | | yes | Yes | | | | | | | |
| | | | | | Yes | | | | | | | |
| | | | | | Yes | | | | | | | |
| | | | | | Yes | | | | | | | |
| | | | | | Yes | Amazing | | | | | | |
| | | | | | Yes | | | | | | | |
| | | | | | Yes | Amazing! Must have- minority student | | | | | | |
| | | | | | Yes | | | | | | | |
| | | | | | No | Has difficulty keeping up and turning in work in 8th grade Science. | | | | | | |
| | | | | | Yes | | | | | | | |
| | | | | | No | Very disruptive, does not follow directions, argumentative, rude to classmates and teachers | | | | | | |
| | | | | | Yes | **Amazing | | | | | | |
| | | | | | Yes | | | | | | | |



| | | | | | | | |
|--|-------------|-----|--|--|--|--|--|
| | | No | Not motivated, does not work to his ability, struggles with being on task, makes poor choices | | | | |
| | | Yes | | | | | |
| | | Yes | | | | | |
| | | Yes | *** | | | | |
| | | Yes | *** | | | | |
| | | Yes | *** | | | | |
| | | Yes | *Advocates well for himself when he doesn't understand a concept the first time. | | | | |
| | | Yes | | | | | |
| | | Yes | | | | | |
| | | Yes | *** | | | | |
| | | Yes | *** | | | | |
| | | Yes | | | | | |
| | | Yes | *** | | | | |
| | | Yes | | | | | |
| | | Yes | | | | | |
| | | No | Does not follow directions and very immature emotionally | | | | |
| | | Yes | | | | | |
| | | Yes | *** | | | | |
| | | Yes | Not a Sinaloa student | | | | |
| | | | | | | | |
| | | Yes | | | | | |
| | | Yes | | | | | |
| | | Yes | | | | | |
| | | Yes | *** | | | | |
| | | Yes | *** | | | | |
| | | Yes | | | | | |
| | | Yes | | | | | |
| | | No | Wastes his time in class and distracts others | | | | |
| | | Yes | | | | | |
| | | Yes | *** | | | | |
| | | Yes | ***** Outstanding science student! | | | | |
| | | Yes | ***** Very hard worker! Great communicator. | | | | |
| | | Yes | Maybe- can be disruptive and distracting, but motivated to do well | | | | |
| | | Yes | | | | | |
| | | Yes | | | | | |
| | | Yes | | | | | |
| | | Yes | *** | | | | |
| | | Yes | *** | | | | |
| | | Yes | | | | | |
| | | Yes | Maybe-Can be argumentative, is getting better, does struggle with authority | | | | |
| | | Yes | | | | | |
| | | Yes | *** | | | | |
| | ELD level 4 | Yes | **hopefully reclassified this year, excellent student | | | | |
| | | Yes | | | | | |
| | | Yes | | | | | |
| | | Yes | | | | | |
| | | Yes | Attentive science student. Unmotivated and doesn't follow simple instructions in other some other classes. | | | | |
| | | Yes | | | | | |

| | | | | | | | | | |
|--|-------------|--|-----|---|--|--|--|--|--|
| | | | Yes | Incredible science student! | | | | | |
| | | | Yes | *** | | | | | |
| | ELD level 4 | | Yes | new to Sinaloa this year (Russian) | | | | | |
| | | | Yes | | | | | | |
| | ELD level 4 | | Yes | | | | | | |
| | | | Yes | | | | | | |
| | | | Yes | | | | | | |
| | | | No | Gives up very easily when presented with a challenge | | | | | |
| | | | Yes | | | | | | |
| | | | Yes | | | | | | |
| | | | Yes | | | | | | |
| | | | Yes | *** | | | | | |
| | | | Yes | | | | | | |
| | | | Yes | | | | | | |
| | | | Yes | *** | | | | | |
| | | | Yes | | | | | | |
| | | | Yes | *** | | | | | |
| | | | Yes | Maybe. Issues at the beginning of the year copying other student's work. Occasionally displays resistance to teacher behavior expectations. | | | | | |
| | | | Yes | | | | | | |
| | | | Yes | | | | | | |
| | | | Yes | | | | | | |
| | | | Yes | *** | | | | | |
| | | | Yes | | | | | | |
| | | | Yes | *** | | | | | |
| | | | Yes | *** Great student. Asks A LOT of questions! | | | | | |
| | | | | | | | | | |
| | | | | ****AWESOME" Bousquette | | | | | |

RE STEM Marin - Applicant Offers - Review Requested

From: JAIME LUTZ
Sent: Monday, February 3, 2020 10:14 AM
To: MICHAEL R. SAISI; JEFFERY WALLACE
Cc: KATHERINE WARREN
Subject: RE: STEM Marin - Applicant Offers - Review Requested

Great, thanks Mike!

Jaime Lutz

STEM Marin Coordinator
San Marin High School
15 San Marin Drive
Novato, CA 94945
415.798.5194
STEMMarin.org

From: MICHAEL R. SAISI <msaisi@nUSD.org>
Sent: Monday, February 3, 2020 10:12 AM
To: JAIME LUTZ <JLUTZ@nUSD.org>; JEFFERY WALLACE <JWallace@nUSD.org>
Cc: KATHERINE WARREN <KWARREN@nUSD.org>
Subject: RE: STEM Marin - Applicant Offers - Review Requested

Jamie,

There are a few with attendance issues, but other than that, they are all great kids.

Thanks for checking in!

Mike

From: JAIME LUTZ <JLUTZ@nUSD.org>
Sent: Monday, February 3, 2020 9:48 AM
To: MICHAEL R. SAISI <msaisi@nUSD.org>; JEFFERY WALLACE <JWallace@nUSD.org>
Cc: KATHERINE WARREN <KWARREN@nUSD.org>
Subject: RE: STEM Marin - Applicant Offers - Review Requested

Hello!

Hope you both had a nice weekend. I just wanted to reach out and check in see if you had any issues with the students listed below? We are looking to offer acceptances to the STEM Marin program today and we would like to make sure there aren't any red flags we need to be aware of.

If you two are not the right ones to review, could you please let me know who I

RE STEM Marin - Applicant Offers - Review Requested

could contact?

Thanks so much!

Jaime

Jaime Lutz

STEM Marin Coordinator
San Marin High School
15 San Marin Drive
Novato, CA 94945
415.798.5194
STEMMarin.org

From: JAIME LUTZ

Sent: Friday, January 31, 2020 1:51 PM

To: MICHAEL R. SAISI <msaisi@nUSD.org>; JEFFERY WALLACE <JWALLACE@nUSD.org>

Cc: KATHERINE WARREN <KWARREN@nUSD.org>

Subject: STEM Marin - Applicant Offers - Review Requested

Hello and Happy Friday!

We have finished reviewing the applications for the STEM Marin Program for the 2020-2021 school year.

Below is a list of students we are planning to send offers to. Could you please take a quick moment to review the list of names and let us know if there are any red flags for these students or any behavioral issues.

Thank you so much for your time.

Jaime

Jaime Lutz

STEM Marin Coordinator
San Marin High School
15 San Marin Drive
Novato, CA 94945
415.798.5194
STEMMarin.org

RE STEM Marin - Applicant Offers - Review Requested (San Jose)
From: JAIME LUTZ
Sent: Monday, February 3, 2020 10:10 AM
To: GABRIEL LUND
Subject: RE: STEM Marin - Applicant Offers - Review Requested (San Jose)

Ok great, I will call you from Kathy's office.

Thanks!

Jaime Lutz

STEM Marin Coordinator
San Marin High School
15 San Marin Drive
Novato, CA 94945
415.798.5194
STEMMarin.org

From: GABRIEL LUND <GLUND@nUSD.org>
Sent: Monday, February 3, 2020 10:10 AM
To: JAIME LUTZ <JLUTZ@nUSD.org>
Subject: Re: STEM Marin - Applicant Offers - Review Requested (San Jose)

Let's chat at 1! It won't take very long.

Gabriel Lund
Asst. Principal
San Jose Middle School
Novato Unified School District
glund@nUSD.org
415-883-7831 ext. 5270

From: JAIME LUTZ <JLUTZ@nUSD.org>
Sent: Monday, February 3, 2020 9:28 AM
To: GABRIEL LUND <GLUND@nUSD.org>; DEBORAH RICHARDSON <DRICHARDSON@nUSD.org>
Cc: KATHERINE WARREN <KWARREN@nUSD.org>
Subject: RE: STEM Marin - Applicant Offers - Review Requested (San Jose)

Hi Gabe:

Do you have some time today to talk about the students? Kathy and I could call you directly at 1pm if that works?

Thanks!

Jaime Lutz

RE STEM Marin - Applicant Offers - Review Requested (San Jose)

STEM Marin Coordinator
San Marin High School
15 San Marin Drive
Novato, CA 94945
415.798.5194
STEMMarin.org

From: GABRIEL LUND <GLUND@nUSD.org>
Sent: Friday, January 31, 2020 2:15 PM
To: JAIME LUTZ <JLUTZ@nUSD.org>; DEBORAH RICHARDSON <DRICHARDSON@nUSD.org>
Cc: KATHERINE WARREN <KWARREN@nUSD.org>
Subject: Re: STEM Marin - Applicant Offers - Review Requested (San Jose)

Hi Jaime,

That's a great looking group of students! There are a few students I'd like to give you a bit of background on, but none that should be denied acceptance to the program. I'd be happy to have a brief discussion over the phone as one student in particular has had a complicated home life.

Thanks for reaching out and have a lovely weekend,
Gabe

Gabriel Lund
Asst. Principal
San Jose Middle School
Novato Unified School District
glund@nUSD.org
415-883-7831 ext. 5270

From: JAIME LUTZ <JLUTZ@nUSD.org>
Sent: Friday, January 31, 2020 1:53 PM
To: DEBORAH RICHARDSON <DRICHARDSON@nUSD.org>; GABRIEL LUND <GLUND@nUSD.org>
Cc: KATHERINE WARREN <KWARREN@nUSD.org>
Subject: STEM Marin - Applicant Offers - Review Requested (San Jose)

Hello and Happy Friday!

We have finished reviewing the applications for the STEM Marin Program for the 2020-2021 school year.
Below is a list of students we are planning to send offers to. Could you please take a quick moment to review the list of names and let us know if there are any red flags for these

RE STEM Marin - Applicant Offers - Review Requested (San Jose)
students or any behavioral
issues.

Thank you so much for your time.

Jaime

Jaime Lutz

STEM Marin Coordinator
San Marin High School
15 San Marin Drive
Novato, CA 94945
415.798.5194
STEMMarin.org

Re STEM Marin - Applicant Offers - Review Requested (Hamilton)
From: JAIME LUTZ
Sent: Friday, January 31, 2020 4:16 PM
To: KIMBERLY DUNCAN
Cc: STEPHEN HOSPODAR; STEFANIE PARNELL; KATHERINE WARREN
Subject: Re: STEM Marin - Applicant Offers - Review Requested (Hamilton)

Thank you both for the fast turnaround!

On Jan 31, 2020, at 2:04 PM, KIMBERLY DUNCAN <KDUNCAN@nUSD.org> wrote:

Looks great to me! Thank you!

Kim Duncan
Dean of Students
Hamilton K-8 School
415-883-4691 x5349
kduncan@nUSD.org
<Outlook-1518469365.png>

From: JAIME LUTZ <JLUTZ@nUSD.org>
Sent: Friday, January 31, 2020 1:56 PM
To: STEPHEN HOSPODAR <SHOSPODAR@nUSD.org>; STEFANIE PARNELL <SPARNELL@NUSD.ORG>; KIMBERLY DUNCAN <KDUNCAN@nUSD.org>
Cc: KATHERINE WARREN <KWARREN@nUSD.org>
Subject: STEM Marin - Applicant Offers - Review Requested (Hamilton)

Hello and Happy Friday!

We have finished reviewing the applications for the STEM Marin Program for the 2020-2021 school year. Below is a list of students we are planning to send offers to. Could you please take a quick moment to review the list of names and let us know if there are any red flags for these students or any behavioral issues.

Thank you so much for your time.

Jaime

Jaime Lutz
<image001.png>
STEM Marin Coordinator

Re STEM Marin - Applicant Offers - Review Requested (Hamilton)
San Marin High School
15 San Marin Drive
Novato, CA 94945
415.798.5194
STEMMarin.org

Appendix 6: STEM Budget/Cost PRA Request & Response

Re: STEM program costs/expenditures Public Records Request

From: LESLIE BENJAMIN (lbenjamin@nUSD.org)
To: anecologist@yahoo.com
Date: Wednesday, October 7, 2020, 12:50 PM PDT

Thank you.

Leslie

Leslie Benjamin
She, Her, Hers (Why this matters?)
Director, Communications
& Community Engagement
Novato Unified School District
(415) 897-4259

www.nUSD.org/COVID

From: kate reza <anecologist@yahoo.com>
Sent: Wednesday, October 7, 2020 12:29 PM
To: LESLIE BENJAMIN <LBENJAMIN@nUSD.org>
Subject: Re: STEM program costs/expenditures Public Records Request

WARNING! This email originated from outside of NUSD. Do not click links or open attachments unless you recognize the sender and know the content is safe.

Hello Leslie,
Thank you for asking the clarifying question.
I only need the budget information for the STEM San Marin High School program to which students apply.
Please do not hesitate to contact me with further questions.
Thanks again, and wishing you very good health,
Kate

Kate Reza
707.321.8638

On Tuesday, October 6, 2020, 3:15:29 PM PDT, LESLIE BENJAMIN <lbenjamin@nUSD.org> wrote:

Hi Kate,

I have a clarifying question. Are you requesting budget information for the STEM Marin program at San Marin or all STEM related classes at both high schools?

Thank you.

Leslie

Leslie Benjamin
She, Her, Hers (Why this matters?)
Director, Communications
& Community Engagement
Novato Unified School District
(415) 897-4259

www.nUSD.org/COVID

From: kate reza <anecologist@yahoo.com>
Sent: Wednesday, September 30, 2020 4:15 PM
To: LESLIE BENJAMIN <LBENJAMIN@nUSD.org>
Subject: STEM program costs/expenditures Public Records Request

WARNING! This email originated from outside of NUSD. Do not click links or open attachments unless you recognize the sender and know the content is safe.

Hello,
I am requesting the yearly STEM program costs under the Public Records Act.
If the STEM program has a budget, I would like that information, as well as FTE information about the program - number of staff, wages/salaries/benefits, etc. Please also provide any other funding earmarked for the STEM program in whole or part.
Thank you,
Kate

Kate Reza
707.321.8638

10.12.20 NUSD Response to 10.10-11.20 PRA Request

Contained single document named: Lutz salary benefit projection 2020.21.PDF

```
-----
Account classifications selected
Fd Resc Objt Gr Goal Fnct Sch Rsp lcl
-----
Field ranges selected
FI RANGE
-----
1. 01-0000-?-2910-??-1394-1000-403-000-???
2. 01-0000-?-3??2-??-1394-1000-403-000-000
3. - - - - - - - -
4. - - - - - - - -
5. - - - - - - - -
6. - - - - - - - -
7. - - - - - - - -
8. - - - - - - - -
9. - - - - - - - -
10. - - - - - - - -
```

ENTRY LISTING

```
-----
Projection Year      : 2021
Schedule Year       : 2021
Employee Year       : 2021
Allow Step Changes  : YES
Report type         : By Employee Name
SSN masking         : Name only (no ssn)
Report Type         : ALL SCHEDULES
Global Projections  : 0.0000%
Job Codes           :
Job Categories      :
Work Locations      :
Pay Schedules       :
Work calendars      :
Bargaining Units    :
Report codes        :
Employee types      :
Sort by             : NONE
Page Break on       :
```

| EMPLOYEE/POSITION | POS# | SCHEDULE | START/END FTE | GROSS TOT BEN | PERS | H/W | SUI | WCOMP | MEDICARE | FICA |
|-------------------|---|------------|------------------|------------------|---------|---------|----------|---------|----------|---------|
| LUTZ JAIME L | 576721 | 50-0034-05 | 070120/063021 | 37304.46 | 7722.02 | 1913.12 | 18.65 | 490.18 | 540.91 | 2312.88 |
| | 01-0000-0-2910-00-1394-1000-403-000-000 | | 0.7500 | 12997.76 | | | | | | |
| ----- | | | | | | | | | | |
| FINAL TOTAL | | | | | | | | | | |
| | GROSS/FTE | TOTAL BEN | PERS | H/W | SUI | WCOMP | MEDICARE | FICA | | |
| | 37,304.46 | 12,997.76 | 7722.02 | 1913.12 | 18.65 | 490.18 | 540.91 | 2312.88 | | |
| | 0.7500 | | 7722.02 | 1913.12 | 18.65 | 490.18 | 540.91 | 2312.88 | | |

10.22.20 NUSD Response to 10.10-11.20 PRA Request

Part # 1 (2 pages) was named:

DOC Documents for Response to 10_11-12_20 CPRA Request #1.XLSX

Part #2 (2 pages) was named:

DOC Documents for Response to 10_11-12_20 CPRA Request #2.PDF

Part #3 (2 pages) was named:

DOC Documents for Response to 10_11-12_20 CPRA Requests #3.PDF

Part #4 (2 pages) was named:

DOC Documents for Response to 10_11-12_20 Requests #4.PDF

2019-2020

STEM ACCOUNTS

| Fd Resc Objt Gr Goal Fnct Sch Rsp lcl | Working | Expensed | Committed | Balance |
|--|----------------|-----------------|------------------|----------------|
| 01-9071-0-5819-00-1394-1000-403-076-000 | 136.00 | | 136.00 | 136.00 |
| 01-9046-0-5819-62-1390-1000-403-076-000 | 1,737.00 | - | - | 1,737.00 |
| 01-9046-0-4300-00-1390-1000-403-076-000 | 900.00 | 350.00 | 350.00 | 550.00 |
| | | | | 2,287.00 |

2020-2021

STEM ACCOUNTS

| Fd Resc Objt Gr Goal Fnct Sch Rsp lcl | Working | Expensed | Committed | Balance |
|--|----------------|-----------------|------------------|----------------|
| 01-9046-0-4330-00-1390-1000-403-076-000 | 2,287.00 | - | - | 2,287.00 |
| 01-9071-0-5819-00-1394-1000-403-076-000 | 136.00 | | | 136.00 |

2019-2020

DONNER Carryover from '18-'19

SCHOOLFUEL CARRYOVER FROM '18-'19 *DESIGNATED FIELD TRIP (TRANSPORTATION)

BABEC (Bio Tech STEM)

TOTAL SCHOOL FUEL

2020-2021

SCHOOL FUEL CARRYOVER FROM '19-'20

*DONNER FUND HAS NOT BEEN ALLOCATED AT THIS TIME

| | Account classifications selected | Field ranges selected |
|-----|--|-----------------------|
| | Fd Resc Objt Gr Goal Fnct Sch Rsp lcl | FI RANGE |
| 1. | 01-????-?-2???-??-1394-????-???-???-??? | |
| 2. | 01-????-?-3???2-??-1394-????-???-???-??? | |
| 3. | - - - - - - - - - | |
| 4. | - - - - - - - - - | |
| 5. | - - - - - - - - - | |
| 6. | - - - - - - - - - | |
| 7. | - - - - - - - - - | |
| 8. | - - - - - - - - - | |
| 9. | - - - - - - - - - | |
| 10. | - - - - - - - - - | |

ENTRY LISTING

Projection Year : 2019
Schedule Year : 2019
Employee Year : 2019
Allow Step Changes : YES
Report type : By Account
SSN masking : Name only (no ssn)
Report Type : ALL SCHEDULES
Global Projections : 0.0000%
Job Codes :
Job Categories :
Work Locations :
Pay Schedules :
Work calendars :
Bargaining Units :
Report codes :
Employee types :
Sort by : NONE
Page Break on :

| ACCTCLASS | POS# | SCHEDULE | START/END FTE | GROSS TOT BEN | PERS | FICA | H/W | SUI | WCOMP | MEDICARE |
|---|-----------|------------|------------------|------------------|---------|--------|---------|----------|--------|----------|
| ----- | | | | | | | | | | |
| 01-0000-0-2404-00-1394-2700-403-000-000 | | | | | | | | | | |
| LUTZ JAIME L | 576484 | 50-0034-04 | 120518/063019 | 13662.00 | 2467.63 | 847.04 | 1056.04 | 6.83 | 239.09 | 198.10 |
| | | | 0.4688 | 4814.73 | | | | | | |
| OPEN SCHOOL OFFICE MANAGE | 576484 | 51-0034-03 | 091118/120418* | 5915.48 | 1068.45 | 366.76 | 3819.09 | 2.96 | 103.52 | 85.77 |
| | | | 0.4688 | 5446.55 | | | | | | |
| | | | | | | | | | | |
| ACCOUNT TOTAL | | | | | | | | | | |
| | GROSS/FTE | TOTAL BEN | PERS | FICA | H/W | SUI | WCOMP | MEDICARE | | |
| | 19,577.48 | 10,261.28 | 3536.08 | 1213.80 | 4875.13 | 9.79 | 342.61 | 283.87 | | |
| | 0.4688 | | 3536.08 | 1213.80 | 4875.13 | 9.79 | 342.61 | 283.87 | | |
| | | | | | | | | | | |
| FINAL TOTAL | | | | | | | | | | |
| | GROSS/FTE | TOTAL BEN | PERS | FICA | H/W | SUI | WCOMP | MEDICARE | | |
| | 19,577.48 | 10,261.28 | 3536.08 | 1213.80 | 4875.13 | 9.79 | 342.61 | 283.87 | | |
| | 0.4688 | | 3536.08 | 1213.80 | 4875.13 | 9.79 | 342.61 | 283.87 | | |

```
-----
Account classifications selected
Fd Resc Objt Gr Goal Fnct Sch Rsp lcl
Field ranges selected
FI RANGE
-----
1. 01-????-?-2???-??-1394-????-403-???-???
2. 01-????-?-3???2-??-1394-????-403-???-???
3. - - - - - - - -
4. - - - - - - - -
5. - - - - - - - -
6. - - - - - - - -
7. - - - - - - - -
8. - - - - - - - -
9. - - - - - - - -
10. - - - - - - - -
```

ENTRY LISTING

```
-----
Projection Year      : 2020
Schedule Year       : 2020
Employee Year       : 2020
Allow Step Changes  : YES
Report type         : By Account
SSN masking         : Name only (no ssn)
Report Type         : ALL SCHEDULES
Global Projections  : 0.0000%
Job Codes           :
Job Categories      :
Work Locations      :
Pay Schedules       :
Work calendars      :
Bargaining Units    :
Report codes        :
Employee types      :
Sort by             : NONE
Page Break on       :
```

| ACCTCLASS | POS# | SCHEDULE | START/END FTE | GROSS TOT BEN | PERS | FICA | H/W | SUI | WCOMP | MEDICARE |
|---|----------------------|------------|------------------|------------------|---------|---------|---------|----------|--------|----------|
| ----- | | | | | | | | | | |
| 01-0000-0-2404-00-1394-2700-403-000-000 | | | | | | | | | | |
| LUTZ JAIME L | 576484 | 50-0034-05 | 070119/110519 | 9794.55 | 1931.58 | 607.26 | 522.61 | 4.90 | 146.92 | 142.02 |
| | | | 0.4688 | 3355.29 | | | | | | |
| OPEN | SCHOOL OFFICE MANAGE | 576484 | 51-0034-03 | 110619/110619* | 99.53 | 19.63 | 6.17 | 61.04 | 0.05 | 1.49 |
| | | | 0.4688 | 89.82 | | | | | | 1.44 |
| | | | | | | | | | | |
| ACCOUNT TOTAL | GROSS/FTE | TOTAL BEN | PERS | FICA | H/W | SUI | WCOMP | MEDICARE | | |
| | 9,894.08 | 3,445.11 | 1951.21 | 613.43 | 583.65 | 4.95 | 148.41 | 143.46 | | |
| | | | 1951.21 | 613.43 | 583.65 | 4.95 | 148.41 | 143.46 | | |
| | | | | | | | | | | |
| 01-0000-0-2910-00-1394-1000-403-000-000 | | | | | | | | | | |
| LUTZ JAIME L | 576721 | 50-0034-05 | 110619/063020 | 26060.32 | 5139.36 | 1615.74 | 1390.51 | 13.03 | 390.90 | 377.87 |
| | | | 0.7500 | 8927.41 | | | | | | |
| OPEN | SCHOOL SITE PROGRAM | 576721 | 50-0034-03 | 101619/110519* | 2174.76 | 428.88 | 134.84 | 1047.12 | 1.09 | 32.62 |
| | | | 0.7500 | 1676.08 | | | | | | 31.53 |
| | | | | | | | | | | |
| ACCOUNT TOTAL | GROSS/FTE | TOTAL BEN | PERS | FICA | H/W | SUI | WCOMP | MEDICARE | | |
| | 28,235.08 | 10,603.49 | 5568.24 | 1750.58 | 2437.63 | 14.12 | 423.52 | 409.40 | | |
| | 0.7500 | | 5568.24 | 1750.58 | 2437.63 | 14.12 | 423.52 | 409.40 | | |
| | | | | | | | | | | |
| FINAL TOTAL | GROSS/FTE | TOTAL BEN | PERS | FICA | H/W | SUI | WCOMP | MEDICARE | | |
| | 38,129.16 | 14,048.60 | 7519.45 | 2364.01 | 3021.28 | 19.07 | 571.93 | 552.86 | | |
| | 0.7500 | | 7519.45 | 2364.01 | 3021.28 | 19.07 | 571.93 | 552.86 | | |

```
-----
Account classifications selected
Fd Resc Objt Gr Goal Fnct Sch Rsp lcl
-----
Field ranges selected
FI RANGE
-----
1. 01-0000-?-2910-??-1394-1000-403-000-???
2. 01-0000-?-3??2-??-1394-1000-403-000-000
3. - - - - - - - -
4. - - - - - - - -
5. - - - - - - - -
6. - - - - - - - -
7. - - - - - - - -
8. - - - - - - - -
9. - - - - - - - -
10. - - - - - - - -
```

ENTRY LISTING

```
-----
Projection Year      : 2021
Schedule Year       : 2021
Employee Year       : 2021
Allow Step Changes  : YES
Report type         : By Employee Name
SSN masking         : Name only (no ssn)
Report Type         : ALL SCHEDULES
Global Projections  : 0.0000%
Job Codes           :
Job Categories      :
Work Locations      :
Pay Schedules       :
Work calendars      :
Bargaining Units    :
Report codes        :
Employee types      :
Sort by             : NONE
Page Break on       :
```

| EMPLOYEE/POSITION | POS# | SCHEDULE | START/END FTE | GROSS TOT BEN | PERS | H/W | SUI | WCOMP | MEDICARE | FICA |
|-------------------|---|------------|------------------|------------------|---------|---------|----------|---------|----------|---------|
| LUTZ JAIME L | 576721 | 50-0034-05 | 070120/063021 | 37304.46 | 7722.02 | 1913.12 | 18.65 | 490.18 | 540.91 | 2312.88 |
| | 01-0000-0-2910-00-1394-1000-403-000-000 | | 0.7500 | 12997.76 | | | | | | |
| ----- | | | | | | | | | | |
| FINAL TOTAL | | | | | | | | | | |
| | GROSS/FTE | TOTAL BEN | PERS | H/W | SUI | WCOMP | MEDICARE | FICA | | |
| | 37,304.46 | 12,997.76 | 7722.02 | 1913.12 | 18.65 | 490.18 | 540.91 | 2312.88 | | |
| | 0.7500 | | 7722.02 | 1913.12 | 18.65 | 490.18 | 540.91 | 2312.88 | | |

10.30.20 NUSD Response to 10.10-11.20 PRA Request

Contained single document named:

DOC Documents for Final Response to K. Reza_s 10_11-12_20 CPRA Request.xlsx

| | | | | | |
|--|----------------|-----------------|------------------|----------------|---|
| 2018-2019 | | | | | 2018-2019 |
| STEM ACCOUNTS | | | | | |
| Fd Resc Objt Gr Goal Fnct Sch Rsp lcl | Working | Expensed | Committed | Balance | |
| 01-9046-0-5724-62-1390-1000-403-076-000 | 664 | 806.1 | | -142.1 | STEM FIELD TRIP TRANSPORTATION |
| 01-9046-0-5819-62-1390-1000-403-076-000 | 336 | 0 | | 336 | BIOTECH FIELDTRIP |
| | | | | | |
| 01-9071-0-5819-00-1394-1000-403-076-000 | 1000 | 3122 | | -2122 | DONNER STEM FIELD TRIPS |
| | | | | -1928.1 | BALANCE |
| | | | | | |
| | | | | | |
| 2019-2020 | | | | | 2019-2020 |
| STEM ACCOUNTS | | | | | |
| Fd Resc Objt Gr Goal Fnct Sch Rsp lcl | Working | Expensed | Committed | Balance | |
| 01-9071-0-5819-00-1394-1000-403-076-000 | 136.00 | | 136.00 | 136.00 | DONNER Carryover from '18-'19 |
| | | | | | |
| 01-9046-0-5819-62-1390-1000-403-076-000 | 1,737.00 | - | - | 1,737.00 | SCHOOLFUEL CARRYOVER FROM '18-'19 *DESIGNATED FIELD TRIP (TRANSPORTATION) |
| 01-9046-0-4300-00-1390-1000-403-076-000 | 900.00 | 350.00 | 350.00 | 550.00 | BABEC (Bio Tech STEM) |
| | | | | 2,287.00 | TOTAL SCHOOL FUEL |
| | | | | | |
| | | | | | |
| 2020-2021 | | | | | 2020-2021 |
| STEM ACCOUNTS | | | | | |
| Fd Resc Objt Gr Goal Fnct Sch Rsp lcl | Working | Expensed | Committed | Balance | |
| 01-9046-0-4330-00-1390-1000-403-076-000 | 2,287.00 | - | - | 2,287.00 | SCHOOL FUEL CARRYOVER FROM '19-'20 |
| 01-9071-0-5819-00-1394-1000-403-076-000 | 136.00 | | | 136.00 | *DONNER FUND HAS NOT BEEN ALLOCATED AT THIS TIME |

STEM Program Response Letters from NUSD



Kris Cosca, EdD
Superintendent

Leslie Benjamin
Director, Communications &
Community Engagement

1015 7th St
Novato, CA 94945

T: (415) 897-4259
www.nusd.org

October 12, 2020

VIA EMAIL

Ms. Kate Reza
anecologist@yahoo.com

Re: District's Determination re September 30, 2020 California Public Records Act Request

Dear Ms. Kate:

This constitutes Novato Unified School District's determination regarding the disclosure of records within its possession that are responsive to your California Public Records Act Request ("Request") received by email on September 30, 2020. The District has determined that your Request seeks access to a disclosable public record in its possession which is being attached with this response. However, some of the records within the scope of your Request are exempt from disclosure under the applicable exemption, as discussed below.

The District responds to your Request as follows:

Request No. 1

I am requesting the yearly STEM program costs under the Public Records Act.

Request No. 2

If the STEM program has a budget, I would like that information, as well as FTE information about the program – number of staff, wages/salaries/benefits, etc.

Request No. 3

Please also provide any other funding earmarked for the STEM program in whole or part.

Response to Request No. 1 to 3

Please understand that the CPRA does not require the District to create records. The District's obligation is limited to producing existing records. [See Haynie v. Superior Court (2001) 26 Cal. 4th 1061, 1075.] Furthermore, under the CPRA, "public records" are "any writing containing information relating to the conduct of the public's

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Ms. Kate Reza
October 12, 2020
Page Two

business prepared, owned, used, or retained by any state or local agency regardless of physical form or characteristics.” [Gov. Code § 6252(e).] As such, to the extent that your request requires the District to compile information and create a new record reflecting such information, the District is not obligated and does not undertake to do so.

Notwithstanding the above exemption, the District attaches a salary benefit report with this response.

Pursuant to Government Code § 6253(d), you are hereby informed that the undersigned is the public official responsible for the determination set forth above. Should you have any questions or concerns about any of the foregoing, please do not hesitate to contact me at (415) 897-4259.

Sincerely,

Leslie Benjamin
Director, Communications
& Community Engagement



Kris Cosca, EdD
Superintendent

Leslie Benjamin
Director, Communications &
Community Engagement

1015 7th St
Novato, CA 94945

T: (415) 897-4259
www.nusd.org

October 22, 2020

VIA EMAIL

Ms. Kate Reza
anecologist@yahoo.com

Re: District's Determination re October 11-12, 2020 California Public Records Act Requests

Dear Kate:

This constitutes Novato Unified School District's determination regarding the disclosure of records within its possession that are responsive to your California Public Records Act Requests received by emails on October 11 and 12, 2020. The District has determined that your requests seek access to a disclosable public record in its possession which is being attached with this response. However, some of the records within the scope of your Request are exempt from disclosure under the applicable exemption, as discussed below.

The District responds to your requests as follows:

Request No. 1

Budget for the San Marin STEM program for the 2018/19 and 2019/20 school year in addition to the previous request for the 2020/21 school year STEM program budget.

Response to Request No. 1

Please understand that the CPRA does not require the District to *create* records. The District's obligation is limited to producing existing records. [See *Haynie v. Superior Court* (2001) 26 Cal. 4th 1061, 1075.] Furthermore, under the CPRA, "public records" are "any writing containing information relating to the conduct of the public's business prepared, owned, used, or retained by any state or local agency regardless of physical form or characteristics." [Gov. Code § 6252(e).] As such, to the extent that your request requires the District to compile information and create a new record reflecting such information, the District is not obligated and does not undertake to do so.

Notwithstanding the above exemption, the District attaches a budget detail reports for the 2019-2020 and 2020-2021 school years regarding the STEM program with this response. At this time, the District has not located records for the 2018-2019. However, the District is continuing its search for records and should such records exist, the District anticipates it may be able to locate and produce additional records by **Thursday, November 5, 2020.**

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BOARD OF TRUSTEES: Maria Aguila, Debbie Butler, Thomas Cooper, Diane Gasson, Derek Knell, Greg Mack, Ross Millerick

www.NUSD.org

Request No. 2

Ethnicity/racial data for the attached documents, which were provided under a separate Public Records Act request. I am not requesting any identifying information; I am requesting the ethnicity of each student alongside the teacher evaluations.

Response to Request No. 2

Please understand that the CPRA does not require the District to *create* records. The District's obligation is limited to producing existing records. [See *Haynie v. Superior Court* (2001) 26 Cal. 4th 1061, 1075.] Furthermore, under the CPRA, "public records" are "any writing containing information relating to the conduct of the public's business prepared, owned, used, or retained by any state or local agency regardless of physical form or characteristics." [Gov. Code § 6252(e).] As such, to the extent that your request requires the District to compile information and create a new record reflecting such information, the District is not obligated and does not undertake to do so.

Notwithstanding the above exemption, the District has not identified any responsive records.

Request No. 3

How are resources obtained by the STEM teachers for their students if there is no budget?

Request No. 4

Or do they have no limit to their spending, and it all comes out of a general budget for San Marin High?

Request No. 5

Or is there some other funding source that is not under District control?

Response to Request No. 3 to 5

Please understand that the CPRA does not require the District to *create* records. The District's obligation is limited to producing existing records. [See *Haynie v. Superior Court* (2001) 26 Cal. 4th 1061, 1075.] Furthermore, under the CPRA, "public records" are "any writing containing information relating to the conduct of the public's business prepared, owned, used, or retained by any state or local agency regardless of physical form or characteristics." [Gov. Code § 6252(e).] As such, to the extent that your request requires the District to compile information and create a new record reflecting such information, the District is not obligated and does not undertake to do so.

Notwithstanding the above exemption, the District attached budget salary benefit projection reports for the 2018-2019, 2019-2020, and 2020-2021 school years.

Ms. Kate Reza
Page Three
October 22, 2020

Pursuant to Government Code § 6253(d), you are hereby informed that the undersigned is the public official responsible for the determination set forth above.

Should you have any questions or concerns about any of the foregoing, please do not hesitate to contact me at (415) 897-4259.

Sincerely,

Leslie Benjamin
Director, Communications
& Community Engagement



Kris Cosca, EdD
Superintendent

Leslie Benjamin
Director, Communications &
Community Engagement

1015 7th St
Novato, CA 94945

T: (415) 897-4259
www.nusd.org

October 30, 2020

VIA EMAIL

Ms. Kate Reza
anecologist@yahoo.com

Re: District's Final Response to October 11-12, 2020 California Public Records Act Requests

Dear Ms. Reza:

This constitutes Novato Unified School District's final response regarding the disclosure of records within its possession that are responsive to your California Public Records Act Requests received by emails on October 11 and 12, 2020. The District has determined that your requests seek access to an additional disclosable public record in its possession which is being attached with this response.

The District responds to your requests as follows:

Request No. 1

Budget for the San Marin STEM program for the 2018/19 and 2019/20 school year in addition to the previous request for the 2020/21 school year STEM program budget.

Response to Request No. 1

The District attaches a budget detail report for the 2018-2019, 2019-2020, and 2020-2021 school years regarding the STEM program with this response.

Pursuant to Government Code § 6253(d), you are hereby informed that the undersigned is the public official responsible for the determination set forth above.

This concludes our handling of the above-referenced matter.

Sincerely,

Leslie Benjamin
Director, Communications
& Community Engagement

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Appendix 7: LCAP 2019/2020 Decrease in Equity Funding for STEM Program

| | | |
|--|--|--|
| | | |
|--|--|--|

Budgeted Expenditures

| Year | 2017-18 | 2018-19 | 2019-20 |
|------------------|---|---|---|
| Amount | \$177,601 | \$160,710 | \$151,355 |
| Source | Supplemental | Supplemental | LCFF Supplemental |
| Budget Reference | 5800: Professional/Consulting Services And Operating Expenditures | 5800: Professional/Consulting Services And Operating Expenditures | 1000-1999: Certificated Personnel Salaries All salaries and benefits |

Action 4

| | |
|---|--|
| For Actions/Services not included as contributing to meeting the Increased or Improved Services Requirement: | |
| Students to be Served: (Select from All, Students with Disabilities, or Specific Student Groups) <input type="text" value="[Add Students to be Served selection here]"/> | Location(s): (Select from All Schools, Specific Schools, and/or Specific Grade Spans) <input type="text" value="[Add Location(s) selection here]"/> |

OR

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| For Actions/Services included as contributing to meeting the Increased or Improved Services Requirement: | | |
| Students to be Served: (Select from English Learners, Foster Youth, and/or Low Income) <input type="text" value="English Learners"/> <input type="text" value="Foster Youth"/> <input type="text" value="Low Income"/> | Scope of Services: (Select from LEA-wide, Schoolwide, or Limited to Unduplicated Student Group(s)) <input type="text" value="LEA-wide"/> | Location(s): (Select from All Schools, Specific Schools, and/or Specific Grade Spans) <input type="text" value="All Schools"/> |

Actions/Services

| | | |
|--|--|---|
| Select from New, Modified, or Unchanged for 2017-18 <input type="text" value="Unchanged Action"/> | Select from New, Modified, or Unchanged for 2018-19 <input type="text" value="Unchanged Action"/> | Select from New, Modified, or Unchanged for 2019-20 <input type="text" value="Modified Action"/> |
| 2017-18 Actions/Services | 2018-19 Actions/Services | 2019-20 Actions/Services |

National Equity Project (Contracted Service) National Equity Project is providing training and coaching services to support a targeted strategic plan to close the achievement gap with a specific focus on increasing the participation level of sub-groups in specialized programs such as STEM, AVID, GATE, MSA, AP courses.

National Equity Project (Contracted Service) National Equity Project is providing training and coaching services to support a targeted strategic plan to close the achievement gap with a specific focus on increasing the participation level of sub-groups in specialized programs such as STEM, AVID, GATE, MSA, AP courses. The work with NEP is measured in two ways. Through a focus student approach which

National Equity Project (Achievement gap Professional Development). This action is defunded due to recommendations derived from the budget reduction survey.

Budgeted Expenditures

| Year | 2017-18 | 2018-19 | 2019-20 |
|------------------|---|---|---------|
| Amount | \$107,200 | \$76,785 | \$0.00 |
| Source | Supplemental | Supplemental | |
| Budget Reference | 5800: Professional/Consulting Services And Operating Expenditures | 5800: Professional/Consulting Services And Operating Expenditures | |

Action 5

For Actions/Services not included as contributing to meeting the Increased or Improved Services Requirement:

Students to be Served:

(Select from All, Students with Disabilities, or Specific Student Groups)

[Add Students to be Served selection here]

Location(s):

(Select from All Schools, Specific Schools, and/or Specific Grade Spans)

[Add Location(s) selection here]

OR

For Actions/Services included as contributing to meeting the Increased or Improved Services Requirement:

Students to be Served:

(Select from English Learners, Foster Youth, and/or Low Income)

Scope of Services:

(Select from LEA-wide, Schoolwide, or Limited to Unduplicated Student Group(s))

Location(s):

(Select from All Schools, Specific Schools, and/or Specific Grade Spans)

EXHIBIT 2



Kris Cosca
Superintendent

Jennifer Larson
Assistant Superintendent
Education Services

1015 7th Street
Novato, CA 94945

T: 415-493-4269
F: 415-892-5402

January 25, 2021

Kate Reza
3501 Novato Blvd.
Novato, CA 94947

SUBJECT: San Marin High School STEM Program Uniform Complaint

Dear Ms. Reza:

This letter serves to confirm that on December 7, 2021, the Novato Unified School District received by email your Uniform Complaint Form Submission. Pursuant to NUSD Board Policy and Administrative Regulation 1312.3, an investigation and written decision will be sent to the complainant within 60 days of receipt. As such, an investigation has been conducted and the following decisions have been made in regards to the complaint(s).

1. Opaque Admissions Process with Potential for Bias

- a. There is no written evaluation procedure and no documentation of evaluation process
 - i. The STEM Marin website now includes a full page dedicated to the evaluation procedure and process. This information can be found at <https://stemmarin.nusd.org/our-programs/stem-marin-application-2020-2021/>
- b. The District does not give guidelines to students and parents about how the students will be evaluated for admissions, and admissions essays are improperly monitored to prevent students from having others write the essay.

As articulated on the application information page of the website, the short-answer scenario prompt portion of the application is scored using a 3 point rubric. The short answers are scored by a team including a school administrator and the program coordinator. Academic integrity is an important component of every student's learning journey. The intent of the written component is to gauge a student's interest and background in the critical components of the STEM program, not to score writing ability. For this reason, it is paired with an oral interview process. This process ensures multiple metrics and venues in which a student can present their interest in the program.

- c. Essay questions favor students with experience in group learning, refined critical thinking skills and better writing skills.

There are no essays included in the application process. The written short-answer scenario prompts are designed to give students an opportunity to share their experiences and understanding about the critical components of the STEM program: group/team work, problem-solving, creativity, flexibility, time-management and interest in the STEM program. Students are offered both a written and oral opportunity to express themselves and participate in the application process.



Kris Cosca
Superintendent

1015 7th Street
Novato, CA 94945

Jennifer Larson
Assistant Superintendent
Education Services

T: 415-493-4269
F: 415-892-5402

d. There is no clear method for combining essay scores with grades to further rank students.

.In terms of overall GPA, in order to participate in any NUSD special program, including athletics, students must maintain a minimum of a 2.0 GPA, regular attendance, and a positive citizenship record (Board Policy/Administrative Regulation 6145). While all applicants must meet the minimum GPA requirement, only past grades in math and science factor into the STEM selection process. Because of the technical nature of the STEM courses, students need to show a pattern of either consistent proficiency or consistent growth ending squarely within the proficient band in math and science classes. Students must be earning a C or better by the end of the fall semester of 8th grade in order to be considered a viable candidate.

e. Students are evaluated based solely on the opinion of one teacher.

.Every component of the application and evaluation process is completed by a panel. This panel includes a school administrator, STEM program coordinator, a representative of the teaching staff, and a member of the Teacher Equity Team.

2. Recommended Remedies

. The District create clear, explicit and objective criteria by which each student is evaluated to the STEM program.

.NUSD agrees and has updated the website to include a more clear outline of the criteria by which each student is evaluated to the STEM program.

a. After students are evaluated, students who are not selected should be able to access their scores and receive feedback on their application in order to create a learning environment that fosters student improvement.

.In the past, all students who were not selected for the program have received a letter expressing the areas that needed to be met for enrollment. Moving forward, this letter will clearly align to the specific requirements necessary for enrollment. It will also include the process for requesting feedback on their application process to foster growth and further learning. With hundreds of applicants each year, this process will mirror that of all other special programs in NUSD. Upon request, students will have access to learn which criteria and/or threshold were met and not met throughout the process.

b. An appeals process to a third party, such as the school board, should be developed so that students have recourse if they are not selected to the program.

.As a specialized program within a larger school community, STEM offers a unique, but optional pathway. All students at San Marin High School have the opportunity to participate in a high quality learning environment with access to a robust variety of course offerings. Students who are not selected for the full STEM program can choose to participate in similar classes offered to non STEM students.

c. An annual assessment of STEM program student demographics should be conducted with a rebalancing of admissions criteria in the demographics if the STEM program does not represent the community in various ways. Such data should be disaggregated by school site and student subgroup, including age, race, ethnicity.

San Marin has an annual review process that includes an analysis of its demographics, completion rates, student achievement, and post high school success. Each year, this review leads to further refinement and improvement of the program. The gender, race, and ethnic make



NOVATO
UNIFIED
SCHOOL
DISTRICT

Kris Cosca
Superintendent

Jennifer Larson
Assistant Superintendent
Education Services

1015 7th Street
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of the program has become closer to that of the full school community as a result of these reviews. In 2019, NUSD hired a full time special programs liaison for the middle schools. This biliterate staff person's primary role is to build relationships with the 8th grade students, ensure that every student and family has information and access to all NUSD special program applications, and walk each student through the process from beginning to end. In 2020, NUSD hired a second biliterate staff person to expand this work to reach a larger number of students.

Kind Regards,

Jennifer Larson
Assistant Superintendent Education Services

EXHIBIT 3

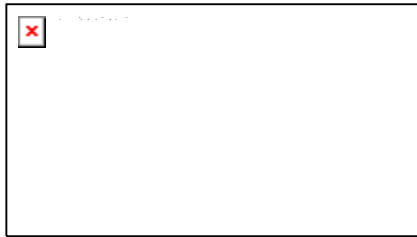
Tara Coughlin

From: JENNIFER LARSON <jenlarsonandrews@nUSD.org>
Sent: Wednesday, February 10, 2021 2:49 PM
To: Linnea Nelson
Cc: kate reza; Brandon Greene; KRISTOPHER COSCA; JONATHAN FERRER
Subject: Re: 2021.02.05 ACLU-NorCal Letter to Novato USD Supt Cosca.pdf

Good afternoon.

As stated in AR 1312.3 "Any such appeal shall be filed within 30 days of receiving the decision." Based on our records, your client, K. Reza received the response from the Novato Unified School District via email on February 2, 2021 and by mail on February 4, 2021, therefore February 2, 2021 is the operative date in terms of when to file an appeal. The January 25, 2021 date on the response is reflective of the date the response was crafted and irrelevant to the appeal process. As such, your client can submit an appeal on or before Thursday, March 4, 2021.

Thank you-



Jennifer Larson Director of Student Success

415.493.4242 | jandrews@nUSD.org | www.NUSD.org
1015 7th St, Novato, CA 94945



From: Linnea Nelson <lnelson@aclunc.org>
Sent: Friday, February 5, 2021 10:43 AM
To: KRIS COSCA <KCOSCA@nUSD.org>
Cc: JENNIFER ANDREWS LARSON <jenlarsonandrews@nUSD.org>; kate reza <anecologist@yahoo.com>; Brandon Greene <BGreene@aclunc.org>
Subject: 2021.02.05 ACLU-NorCal Letter to Novato USD Supt Cosca.pdf

WARNING! This email originated from outside of NUSD. Do not click links or open attachments unless you recognize the sender and know the content is safe.

Dear Superintendent Cosca,

Attached please find a letter regarding the correspondence my client, Kate Reza, received from Novato USD yesterday. We look forward to your prompt response.

Thank you,

Linnea Nelson
Education Equity Staff Attorney
Pronouns: She / Her / Hers
ACLU Foundation of Northern California
39 Drumm Street
San Francisco, CA 94111

Tel.: 415.293.6383
lnelson@aclunc.org
www.aclunc.org

BLACK LIVES MATTER.

DONATE:

- [Fund for the Family of Walter Wallace](#) – *This fund is for Walter Wallace's wife and children. Mr. Wallace was shot and killed by police officers in a West Philadelphia neighborhood on October 26.*
- [Eviction Prevention Fund for BIPOC MaGes](#)– *This fund is to protect Black or Brown women, femmes, and non-binary folks from losing their housing. This team of fundraisers works under the leadership of BLM Louisville organizers at Reparations Roundtable*
- [Anti-Police Terror Project](#) – [Anti-Police Terror Project](#) is a Black-led, multi-racial, intergenerational coalition based in the Bay Area that seeks to build a replicable and sustainable model to eradicate police terror in communities of color.
- [The Okra Project](#) – [The Okra Project](#) is a collective that seeks to address the global crisis faced by Black Trans people by bringing home cooked, healthy, and culturally specific meals and resources to Black Trans People wherever we can reach them.

LEARN:

- [Gold Chains: The Hidden History of Slavery in California](#)
- [A Black Psychologist's Guide to Talking With Your Children about Race and Police Violence](#)
- [The African American Policy Forum](#)
- [#SayHerName](#) Campaign

TAKE ACTION:

- [Sign the petition](#) for justice for Walter Wallace
- [Sign the petition](#) for justice for Jacob Blake
- [5 Ways White People Can Take Action in Response to White- and State-Sanctioned Violence](#)
- [More here](#)