

**BOARD OF
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Trustee

The Honorable William J. Pendergast III, Presiding Judge
Superior Court of California
600 Union Avenue
Fairfield, CA 94533

Dear Honorable William J. Pendergast III:

The VCUSD Governing Board and Superintendent appreciate the Civil Grand Jury's evaluation of the continuation high school operations across Solano County and its shared commitment to educational equity, student engagement, and graduation success. VCUSD remains dedicated to supporting alternative pathways to graduation for students attending John W. Finney High School. In compliance with California Penal Code Section 933.05, VCUSD responds below to Findings 3, 4, 5, and 6, and Recommendations 3a, 3b, 4, 5, and 6.

FINDING 3: *"As of the date of this report, the incomplete 2024-25 SARC for John W. Finney High School does not show teacher to student ratio; previous reports show classes averaged 21-28 students, which negatively impacts student-teacher time."*

The respondent agrees with the finding: The District agrees that the School Accountability Report Card (SARC) for the 2024–2025 school year required complete reporting on class sizes and student-teacher metrics. VCUSD recognizes that maintaining optimal class sizes is critical for maximizing direct, individualized instruction at John W. Finney High School. Finalized data may not have been available at the time of completion of the report. The SARC will be updated to include this data.

FINDING 4: *"Per the 2024-2025 School Accountability Report Card, John W. Finney rated poor in cleanliness and structural damage, resulting in safety concerns for students attending that school."*

The respondent agrees in part and disagrees in part with the finding: The District agrees that the October 2025 Facility Inspection Tool (FIT) report reflected an overall rating of "poor" regarding cleanliness and structural repairs on the SARC. For any areas of the FIT report that were related to maintenance, work orders were submitted and addressed by district staff. However, the District disagrees that this condition created ongoing safety risks for students, as maintenance work was initiated promptly, and the Grand Jury's physical site tour prior to February 1, 2026, noted no damage or disrepair in the areas inspected.

**Vallejo City Unified
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FINDING 5: *"John W. Finney High School utilizes an outdated method of teaching which does not maximize student and teacher interaction, which is integral to overall student comprehension and success."*

The respondent disagrees with the finding: The District disputes the assertion that Finney's instructional methods are entirely outdated. On the WASC review from 2024, John Finney HS received a rating of Effective or Highly Effective in every assessed area. VCUSD has adopted two new, robust science and mathematics curricula designed to strengthen rigor, engagement, and conceptual understanding. During the site visit, the mathematics curriculum being piloted was the **Carnegie Learning High School Math Solution (Integrated Math I & II, 4th Edition/2022)**, an innovative blended learning program that combines physical MATHbooks to support collaborative learning with **MATHia**, an AI-driven intelligent tutoring platform. The integrated curriculum connects algebra, geometry, and statistics through thematic strands designed to develop conceptual reasoning, mathematical problem-solving, and rigorous mathematical discourse. The program also shifts the teacher's role toward facilitating collaboration, discussion, and deeper student engagement. The mathematics curriculum was actively being piloted at Finney during the time of the visit.

The District also clarifies the role of online coursework and instructional modules at Finney. Online learning is not used simply as a replacement for classroom instruction or as a means of assigning independent "packets." Students are provided with extension activities that account for a fifth credit and allow students to engage in additional learning beyond the core coursework. At times, these extension activities are incorporated into the online curriculum. In addition, some elective courses are delivered through an online platform that provides students with grade-level, rigorous academic content while teachers facilitate, monitor, and support student learning. These instructional approaches are used in conjunction with direct teacher support and are intended to provide students with flexible opportunities to earn credits while maintaining academic rigor.

VCUSD continues to recognize the importance of direct classroom interaction, collaborative learning, and meaningful curriculum engagement and is actively strengthening these areas through the implementation of updated curricula and instructional practices. Finney also incorporates Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports (PBIS), wellness center services, and Student Support Teams to address students' academic, behavioral, and social-emotional needs.

FINDING 6: *"John W. Finney does not offer robust career readiness programs; this impacts student success upon graduation."*

The respondent agrees partially with the finding: The District agrees that expanding robust Career Technical Education (CTE) and structured career readiness programs is essential for preparing Finney graduates to transition successfully into post-secondary education, vocational training, or the workforce. During the time of the visit, John Finney



Continuation Complex offered students the opportunity to participate in a Medical Assistant program designed to prepare students to become nationally certified Clinical Medical Assistants. The program is open to juniors and seniors and is held during evening hours. Although the program is offered off site, John Finney students are provided the opportunity to participate in this all-expenses-paid CTE program, providing them with valuable career preparation, industry-specific training, and a pathway toward nationally recognized certification. VCUSD is actively working with county and local community colleges to identify additional opportunities for students to engage meaningfully in CTE programs while completing their courses. This will provide a pathway for students to complete preliminary courses for dual enrollment and professional certifications.

Respectfully,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Ruben Aurelio'.

Ruben Aurelio, Superintendent
Vallejo City Unified School District