

August 22, 2014

**ORANGE COUNTY
DEPARTMENT
OF EDUCATION**

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AL MIJARES, Ph.D.
County Superintendent
of Schools

Glenda Sanders
Presiding Judge of the Superior Court
700 Civic Center Drive West
Santa Ana, CA 92701

Dear Judge Sanders:

Thank you for the opportunity to respond to the Orange County Grand Jury report dated May 20, 2014, entitled *Juvenile Offenders and Recidivism: Orange County Solutions*, prepared by the 2013-14 Grand Jury. The Orange County Probation Department and the Orange County Department of Education have developed a cohesive and collaborative relationship to support our mutual areas of interest in providing services, care and education to juveniles in detention facilities.

As the Orange County Superintendent of Schools, I appreciate the time and energy taken by the Orange County Grand Jury to research, investigate and analyze the educational delivery programs provided by the Orange County Department of Education and other agencies. The report required responses to the areas of Findings F.8, F.9, F.10, and F.11, and Recommendations R.2 and R.4, to which we have complied below.

Findings:

F.8. The recently established collaborative teams of the Community Day School in the Santa Ana Unified School District, Orange County Probation Department, and various community services, are working as a cohesive team within the budget limitations of this pilot program.

Response:

We disagree partially with the finding.

The Community Day School in the Santa Ana Unified School District is not within the jurisdiction of the County Superintendent of Schools, and therefore the Orange County Department of Education does not have the legal authority to officially make recommendations for change.

F.9. The Probation Department and Santa Ana Unified School District staffs are dedicated to behavioral modification treatments. Additional staff and programs are needed to provide psychological therapies for many juveniles.

Response:

We disagree partially with the finding.

The Community Day School in the Santa Ana Unified School District is not within the jurisdiction of the County Superintendent of Schools, and therefore the Orange County Department of Education does not have the legal authority to officially make recommendations for change.

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F.10. To date, the pilot program of Community Day School is not academically accredited.

Response:

We disagree partially with the finding.

The Community Day School in the Santa Ana Unified School District is not within the jurisdiction of the County Superintendent of Schools, and therefore the Orange County Department of Education does not have the legal authority to officially make recommendations for change.

F.11. OCPD indicated their intention to replicate the Community Day School to other areas of Orange County, upon successful completion of the pilot program.

Response:

The respondent agrees with the findings.

Recommendations:

R.2. The Santa Ana Unified School District, the Superintendent of Schools, and the Orange County Probation Department should continue to seek academic accreditation for the Community Day School. (F.10.)

Response:

We disagree wholly with this finding. The Community Day School in the Santa Ana Unified School District is not within the jurisdiction of the County Superintendent of Schools, and therefore the Orange County Department of Education does not have the legal authority to officially make recommendations for change. Furthermore, it is important to note that the Community Day School in the Santa Ana Unified School District is in compliance with the District's policies and regulations that govern the awarding of the high school diploma.

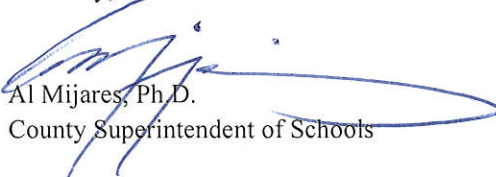
R.4. After successful evaluation of the Community Day School pilot program, the Orange County Probation Department and the Superintendent of Schools should pursue replicating this model to other areas in Orange County. (F.11.)

Response:

The respondent agrees with the findings.

Again, thank you for the opportunity to respond to this report and we look forward to our continued collaborative efforts to support our at-risk juveniles.

Sincerely,



Al Mijares, Ph.D.
County Superintendent of Schools

AM:dn

cc: Orange County Grand Jury
Orange County Board of Supervisors
Nina Boyd, Associate Superintendent. ACCESS
Chief Steve Sentman, Orange County Probation Department