

Capistrano Unified School District

Excellence in Education

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June 8, 2004

Frederick P. Horn
 Presiding Judge of the Superior Court
 Orange County Grand Jury
 700 Civic Center Drive West
 Santa Ana, CA 92701

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DR. JAMES A. FLEMING

Dear Judge Horn:

Below follows Capistrano Unified School District's response to the findings and recommendations of the 2003-2004 Orange County Grand Jury Report, "Childhood & Adolescent Obesity: Making the Orange County Schools Part of the Solution." CUSD was requested to respond to findings #1, #2, #3, #5, #6, #7, and #8.

Finding #1 – State Senate Bill 19, partly amended by the California Childhood Obesity Prevention Act, authorized school districts to establish a Child Nutrition and Physical Activity Committee to help coordinate functions and activities that address students' obesity problems.

State Senate Bill 19 did not go into effect due to the lack of funding. If it had become effective, a Child Nutrition and Physical Activity Committee would have been formed. CUSD Food and Nutrition Services took the initiative to become a member of OC Nutrition and Physical Activity Collaborative, formerly OC Children and Weight Task Force. Our department has been members of this organization for approximately two years and regularly attends their meetings and seminars.

Finding #2 – All food and beverages prepared by school food services in Orange County schools, or supplied under contract by outside vendors and served on the school campuses, are regulated by federal and state requirements.

CUSD Food and Nutrition Services menus are analyzed to meet federal and state requirements for calories, fat content, vitamins, and nutrients. Our menu analysis is submitted to the state for review according to the School Meals Initiative. Our department is compliant and meets the federal guidelines.

Finding #3 – A study in Poway has shown that the greatest improvement in the physical fitness of students occurred when the physical education program was supervised by a Physical Education Specialist.

CUSD has five comprehensive high schools and ten middle schools. Each school meets the California State Education Code requirements for offering a curriculum in Physical Education. Studies conducted by the District's Personnel Services Division show that all 60 of the District's certificated Physical Education instructors hold a baccalaureate with a major in Physical Education.

Finding #5 – Various government grants are available to the schools to help finance and improve the schools' nutrition and physical education programs.

CUSD's Department of Food and Nutrition Services has applied for grants in the past; however, unfortunately, all grants are contingent on 50% Free and Reduced students at a school site. Our district, at a 14% Free and Reduced rate, does not qualify for most nutrition grants. In 1997, our department was a recipient of the SHAPE California Grant. While we are still active members in this program, we do not receive any funds. Funding was only for the first two years of the grant. Obesity is an epidemic among all students, low-income and affluent. Funding should not be limited to only low-income students.



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Finding #6 – Most school districts, faced with budgetary cuts and greater priority on higher academic standards, have gradually decreased their emphasis on physical education.

CUSD revised its high school graduation requirements in 1997 and 1999. Prior to 1997, students were required to complete three years of physical education in order to graduate. Since 1997, CUSD has been aligned with California State Education Code which requires two years of physical education to graduate. All middle school students complete three years of physical education in Grades 6-8.

Finding #7 – Food items provided by the schools' food services are not labeled with their caloric values and nutritional composition; nor is such information posted in the food-serving area.

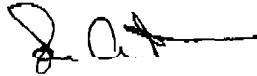
Nutritional information is always made available at the student's or parent's request.

Finding #8 – Body Mass Index is not fully utilized as an assessment tool by schools' nutrition and physical education programs, but is used as appropriate by school nurses for clinical purposes.

In Grades 5, 7, and 9, CUSD is compliant with the California State Physical Fitness Test, which utilizes the Fitnessgram as its assessment tool. The Fitnessgram requires students to evaluate their body mass. All students in these grades take the Fitness Test. Body mass is also discussed in the Grade 7 and 8 Health units as well as the Grade 9 Health class, which covers a full semester and is a graduation requirement.

CUSD is very proud of the work that the Divisions of Support Services and Education do on an annual basis to promote proper nutrition and physical activity in Capistrano Unified School District; thereby assisting to solve the childhood- and adolescent-obesity problem.

Sincerely,



Dr. James A. Fleming
Superintendent

JAF:cs

cc: Orange County Grand Jury