



## ***NEWPORT-MESA Unified School District***

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September 1, 2004

Frederick P. Horn  
Presiding Judge of the Superior Court  
700 Civic Center Drive West  
Santa Ana, Ca 92701

Dear Judge Horn:

Enclosed is Newport-Mesa Unified School District's response to the findings and recommendations of the 2003/04 Grand Jury Report, "Childhood and Adolescent Obesity: Making the Orange County Schools Part of the Solution."

Respectfully,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Robert J. Barbot". The signature is fluid and cursive, written over a horizontal line.

Robert J. Barbot, Ed.D.  
Superintendent

cc: Orange County Grand Jury  
Enclosure

**Response to Findings and Recommendations**

2003-2004 Orange County Grand Jury Report

“Childhood and Adolescent Obesity:  
Making the Orange County Schools Part of the Solution”

July 30, 2004

Newport-Mesa Unified School District  
Robert Barbot, Ed.D., Superintendent  
2985 – A Bear Street  
Costa Mesa, CA 92626

## 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 Education Activity Committee to help coordinate functions and activities that address students' obesity problems.

### Recommendation #1

Each Orange County school district establish a Child Nutrition and Physical Activity Committee to help coordinate functions and activities that address student's obesity problems.

### Response

We agree with the finding and recommendation as stated. Newport-Mesa Unified School District organized a Nutrition Advisory Committee comprised of parents, District Board Members, District physical education faculty members and staff from Nutrition Services and Health Services, early in the 2003-04 school year. The committee meets bi-monthly and prepares recommendations for School Board adoption related to various aspects of District child nutrition and physical activities programs including functions that address student's obesity problems...

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## 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.

### Recommendation #2

School Districts in Orange County continue to ensure that food and beverages served on school campuses meet federal and state requirements.

### Response

We agree with the finding and recommendation as stated. Newport-Mesa Unified School District's Nutrition Services department ensures that food and beverages served to students on campus meets federal and state requirements.

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.

Recommendation #3

Orange County school districts appoint nutrition and physical education specialists who can train classroom teachers in the essentials of their specialties.

Response

We agree with the finding and recommendation as stated. Newport-Mesa Unified School District engages specialists from Nutrition Services to meet with teachers for the purpose of training them to articulate various nutrition education components throughout the curriculum. The Nutrition Services team plans to utilize a Physical Education Specialist in the 2004-05 school year to develop a training program for classroom teachers that will promote increases in daily physical activity for all students. The Physical Education Specialist will develop a program for presentation to teachers during the 2004-05 school year that will improve their ability to positively impact the physical fitness of students.

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Finding #4

The Newport-Mesa Unified School District, under the guidance of competent nutrition specialists, has developed menus of healthful food that the students are eager to purchase and consume.

Recommendation #4

Newport-Mesa Unified School District continue to offer healthful school meals that are appealing and appetizing to the student population, and offer guidance on menu planning to other school districts that request assistance.

Response

We agree with the finding and recommendation as stated. The Nutrition Services Director is available to meet and confer with officials from other Orange County school districts to offer guidance on menu planning as needed.

Finding #5

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

Recommendation #5

Orange County school districts apply for state and federal grants available for improving physical education and nutrition programs.

Response

We agree with the finding and recommendation as stated. Newport-Mesa Unified School District has vigorously pursued and obtained grant funding to improve physical education and nutrition programs throughout the District.

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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.

Recommendation #6

Orange County school districts make available their playgrounds and outdoor facilities before and after school hours for their students under the supervision of interested faculty members and parents.

Response

We disagree with this finding. In recent years the Newport-Mesa Unified School District has increased the level of Physical Education support as evidenced by the implementation of physical education specialists to support elementary grades 4, 5, and 6. There have been no reductions in physical education efforts in recent years within the Newport-Mesa Unified School District.

We agree with recommendation #6. The Newport-Mesa Unified School District utilizes a Facilities Use Permit process to allow faculty members, parents and others access to outdoor facilities. The permit process assures an orderly scheduling and use of all facilities within the district except Davidson Field at Newport Harbor High School. A joint use agreement with the City of Costa Mesa provides for required city approval during certain times of the day for fields within the City of Costa Mesa. The fields at

Lincoln Elementary School in Newport Beach are governed by the City of Newport Beach. However, all facilities are generally available with permits required to assure orderly use and proper indemnification.

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#### 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.

#### Recommendation #7

Orange County school districts ensure that either food items sold on their campuses be labeled with caloric values and nutritional composition or that such information be posted in the food-serving areas.

#### Response

We partially disagree with this finding. Newport-Mesa Unified School District offers various snack and beverage items to students that are packed under local, regional, and national brands in packages identical to those offered for sale in the retail trade. Examples of such items fall under the categories of milk, milk beverages, water, fruit juices and fruit drinks, salty snacks, sweet snacks. The labels on these items contain information related to caloric value and nutritional composition.

Newport-Mesa's Nutrition Services department is planning to implement a "full disclosure" program throughout all locations during the 2004-05 school year that will provide nutrition information postings for all items we sell, at every location where we serve school meals and snacks. These postings will follow the retail guidelines for nutrition information labels. The program will be fully implemented by June, 2005.

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#### 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.

Recommendation #8

Orange County school districts incorporate instruction on the Body Mass Index into the nutrition and physical education programs and encourage students to share this information with their families.

Response

We agree with the finding and recommendation as stated. Newport-Mesa Unified School District's Nutrition Advisory Committee will review existing curriculum guidelines to assure instruction on the Body Mass Index principles at appropriate grade levels including information that students may bring home to their family and use within their home. While teaching these principles in Health and Physical Education programs may prove beneficial for individual or family self assessment in the privacy of the home; the District does not intend widespread application of the Body Mass Index as a screening tool. Such applications tend to alienate those individuals who may be most in need of intervention. Students observe each others' results and they may alienate those most in need of intervention by ostracizing and taunting those who fall outside the "normal" range.

The District will continue to support the appropriate use of the Body Mass Index by school nurses for clinical purposes while assuring individual privacy.

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