

# ***Placentia-Yorba Linda Unified School District***

1301 E. Orangethorpe Avenue, Placentia, California 92870  
Telephone (714) 996-2550 Fax (714) 524-3034

Dennis M. Smith, Ed.D.  
*Superintendent*

*Board of Education*  
Carol Downey  
Karin Freeman  
Judy Miner  
Craig Olson, D.D.S.  
Jan Wagner

July 22, 2004

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

Dear Judge Horn:

Enclosed is a copy of the responses prepared by the Placentia-Yorba Linda Unified School District to the *Findings and Recommendations* of the 2003-2004 Orange County Grand Jury pertaining to "Childhood and Adolescent Obesity: Making the Orange County School Part of the Solution."

Hopefully, these responses include all the information requested for each area. Should you have additional questions, please call me at (714) 996-2550, extension 651.

Yours truly,



Ruth W. Lander, Ed.D.  
Assistant Superintendent, Educational Services

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## Orange County Grand Jury

### ***Childhood and Adolescent Obesity: Making the Orange County Schools Part of the Solution***

While the Placentia-Yorba Linda Unified School District was **not** one of the 17 Orange County school districts interviewed or one of the six school districts visited, responses to Findings and Recommendations 1, 2, 3 and 5 through 8 were requested from **all** school districts in the county.

#### **Findings and Responses**

**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.

**Response:** During the 2003-04 school year, the Placentia-Yorba Linda Unified School District established a ***Student Nutrition Advisory Council (SNAC)***. Membership consists of a cross section of stakeholders including the Assistant Superintendent of Administrative Services, the Assistant Superintendent, Executive Services, the Director of Food Services, the Supervisor of Health Services, the Supervisor of Child Care services, a high school principal, two high school assistant principals, a middle school assistant principal, a high school activities director, a high school athletic director, a teacher, a parent, and a student. The purpose of this council is to address issues of nutrition, health, and obesity.

**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.

**Response:** The Placentia-Yorba Linda Unified School District complies with federal and state requirements for the procurement of food and beverages offered on our campuses.

**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 the Physical Education Specialist.

**Response:** The Placentia-Yorba Linda Unified School District provides a district-coordinated Elementary Physical Education Program that provides 90 minutes per week of instruction with a certified physical education specialist to all students in grades 1 through 6. Students receive instruction on physical fitness, and they participate in a regular fitness routine during each instructional period. Wellness and health concepts are presented in monthly themes which include nutrition.

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

**Response:** From 1998 through 2001, one of district's middle schools (Kraemer Middle School) was honored with a three-year Demonstration Middle School Grant totaling approximately \$100,000. Funds from this grant were used to improve curriculum and develop additional skills and fitness activities for the students. The grant was successfully implemented, and Kraemer is now listed as one of California's Demonstration Middle Schools because of its physical education program.

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

**Response:** The Placentia-Yorba Linda Unified School District has not decreased its emphasis on physical education. Out of financial necessity, the district has reduced the number of physical education specialists at the elementary level from 12.6 to 9.6; however, specialist services are still provided and support is still given to the classroom teacher to an extent that surpasses what is available in many other school districts in the county. There has been no change in the emphasis on physical education at the middle school or high school levels.

**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.

**Response:** The district's Food Services Department does not have the manpower, software, or hardware to develop food labels on the 9,000 meals dispensed each day. With changes in suppliers and in food trends, one posting in the food service area of 4,000 available food items would not remain accurate. The mealtime rush, serving 30 meals per minute, does not provide adequate time to review or reflect the nutritional composition of the food selected.

**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.

**Response:** The Placentia-Yorba Linda Unified School District has consistently used the Body Composition Test for students in grades 5, 7, and 9 as part of the California State Mandated Fitnessgram Test. The results are always presented to and discussed with the students. Parents are mailed the results accompanied by a letter with descriptive comments.

### **Recommendations and Responses**

**Recommendation #1:** Each Orange County school district establish a Child Nutrition and Physical Activity Committee to help coordinate functions and activities that address students' obesity problems. (Finding 1)

**Response:** The district has a child nutrition and physical activity committee called *SNAC* in place. The purpose of this advisory group is to help coordinate functions and activities that address students' obesity problems.

**Recommendation #2:** School districts in Orange County continue to ensure that food and beverages served on school campuses meet federal and state requirements. (Finding 2)

**Response:** In the 2003 program audit entitled *Coordinated Review Effort* conducted by the California Department of Education, Child Nutrition Unit, the Placentia-Yorba Linda Unified School District was found to be in compliance with the School Meal Incentive Program. Currently, the district's Food Services Department computes the nutrients and calories in the food products used in the district's menu in order to satisfy the requirements established by federal and state regulations.

**Recommendation #3:** Orange County school districts appoint nutrition and physical education specialists who can train classroom teachers in the essentials of their specialists. (Finding 3)

**Response:** This district has a strong physical education program at the elementary school level utilizing physical education teacher specialists who deliver a nutrition and fitness curriculum. Even with budgetary reductions, these specialists have developed lessons for elementary classroom teachers to use pertinent to nutrition and fitness. Middle school and high school teachers are fully credentialed physical education teachers.

**Recommendation #5:** Orange County school districts apply for state and federal grants available for improving physical education and nutrition programs. (Finding 5)

**Response:** The Placentia-Yorba Linda Unified School District will seek out and apply for additional federal and state grants for the purpose of improving physical education and nutrition programs. The district will request information concerning available grants from the Orange County Department of 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. (Finding 6)

**Response:** A few of our district schools have been funded through grant monies to provide before/after school activities. While most of the funding provides for academic support and enrichment, there are funds provided for physical activities as well. All of the district's schools are under various joint-use agreements that allow for recreation and official city use of the school sites for various recreational and physical fitness programs.

**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. (Finding 7)

**Response:** The Placentia-Yorba Linda Unified School District's Food Services Department has on file a food product specification sheet for items sold that indicates

the contribution to the designated National School Lunch Program meal pattern. Food manufacturers provide a label and a nutritional analysis of their food products offered through Food Services on the ala carte menu. Effort will be made to have the nutritional analysis of food offered on the district's website.

**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. (Finding 8)

**Response:** Instruction incorporating the Body Mass Index into the district's nutrition and physical education programs and the sharing of this information with students and their families has been and continues to be a district practice.

7/14/04