



*"Preparing today's students to
succeed in tomorrow's world"*

Thursday, October 14, 2004

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

RE: Response to the Grand Jury Report, "Childhood and Adolescent Obesity:
Making the Orange County Schools Part of the Solution"

Dear Judge Horn:

Enclosed please find the Saddleback Valley Unified School District's required response to the Orange County Grand Jury report, "Childhood and Adolescent Obesity: Making the Orange County Schools Part of the Solution".

The District has responded to each of the findings and recommendations in the report and has described the implementation status for each.

We appreciate the efforts of the Grand Jury in this matter and support all efforts to address and improve student health and exercise. Some recommendations made by the Grand Jury for our District have already been addressed.

Respectfully,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Jerry C. Gross".

Jerry C. Gross, Ph.D.
Superintendent

JG:tjb/ms

**SADDLEBACK VALLEY
UNIFIED SCHOOL DISTRICT**

25631 PETER A. HARTMAN WAY
MISSION VIEJO, CALIFORNIA 92691
(949) 586-1234

Jerry C. Gross, Ph.D.
SUPERINTENDENT

BOARD OF EDUCATION
Ginny Fay Aitkens, President
Don Sedgwick, Vice President
Nancy W. Kirkpatrick, Clerk
Dore J. Gilbert, M.D., Member
Suzie R. Swartz, Member

SVUSD Response to Grand Jury Report dated June, 2004
“Childhood and Adolescent Obesity: Making Orange County Schools part of the Solution”

DIRECTIVE:

It is required that the District provide a response to **each** of the findings and recommendations of this report directed to your office in compliance with *Penal Code 933.05(a)* and (b), copy attached. For each Grand Jury recommendation, be sure to describe the implementation status, as well as provide a schedule for future implementation.

FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

1. **Finding** 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.

Recommendation Each Orange County school district establish a Child Nutrition and Physical Activity Committee to help coordinate functions and activities that address students’ obesity problems.

District Response Saddleback Valley Unified School District’s Healthy Kids Advisory Council addresses the issues and activities related to obesity, physical activity, nutrition, and health instruction. The Council membership includes K-12 teachers, parents, agency and organization representatives, students and administrators. In addition, the District participated in the inaugural Coordinated School Health Leadership Institute with a team comprised of teachers, a parent and an administrator. Exercise, nutrition and personal fitness will continue as a focus of this group.

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

District Response The Saddleback Valley Unified School District does insure that food and beverages served on school campuses meet the federal and state requirements and will continue to do so. Trained professionals continually monitor requirements and verify that standards are consistently implemented.

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

District Response All Saddleback Valley Unified School District physical educators have current single-subject credentials in physical education. In addition, this marks the third year for the District's new 4-6 physical education program, which provides half of the mandated physical education instruction in upper elementary. Itinerant teams consisting of one physical educator and two specially trained instructional assistants provide the initial 4-6 physical education instruction at all elementary schools. The classroom teachers provide the remaining 4-6 PE instruction, following District-approved curriculum and lessons prepared by the itinerant team teachers. Primary grade physical education is taught by the classroom teachers.

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

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

District Response The Saddleback Valley Unified School District applies for state and federal grants that are available and for which they are deemed eligible provided the grant is in alignment with our education and instructional plan.

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

Recommendation **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.**

District Response Saddleback Valley Unified School District's outdoor facilities at the elementary and intermediate level are currently being used by community organizations such as little league baseball, AYSO and club soccer, football, lacrosse, and rugby from 4:00 p.m. until dusk. High school outdoor facilities are used by the school's C.I.F. teams. In conjunction with this, the District, through its Recreation & Community Services Department, offers fee based before and after school day care at every elementary school, free city sponsored after-school activities for elementary schools in Mission Viejo and Lake Forest, noon time sports and activities for elementary schools conducted by trained Recreation staff, and fee-based after-school intramural programs conducted by school faculty members.

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

District Response The Saddleback Valley Unified School District is currently in the process of installing nutritional information boards at all school sites. Every school site will have a nutritional poster or menu board that will communicate the caloric values and nutritional composition of the foods offered. In addition, the Saddleback Valley Unified School District will soon have a web based nutrition page that will allow parents and students to review the caloric values and nutritional composition of foods being offered and to select the foods of their choice for prepared meals.

8. **Finding** 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 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.

District Response Age-appropriate instruction on the Body Mass Index (BMI) is included as part of health instruction within the theme of "accepting responsibility for lifelong health" and in physical education in conjunction with the California Physical Fitness Test (CPFT). BMI information as it relates to the CPFT is currently being utilized to make curriculum decisions. In addition, staff development training will be conducted to further encourage multiple uses of BMI information in instruction, specifically to incorporate student personal fitness goal setting, identification of strategies for achieving nutritional and exercise goals, and utilization of personal fitness portfolios.