

**ORANGE COUNTY
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OF EDUCATION**

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March 11, 2003

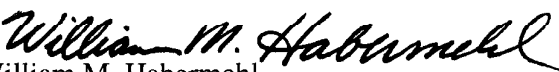
The Honorable Fredrick P. Horn
Presiding Judge of the Superior Court
700 Civic Center Drive West
Santa Ana, CA 92701

Dear Judge Horn:

Enclosed is the Orange County Department of Education's response to the 2002-2003 Orange County Grand Jury Report, "Reversing Recidivism." An electronic format is also enclosed per the Grand Jury's request.

If you have any questions regarding our response, please call me at 714.966.4001.

Sincerely,


William M. Habermehl
County Superintendent of Schools

WMH:jf

Enclosure

cc: Carlos N. Olvera, Foreman
2002-2003 Orange County Grand Jury

ORANGE COUNTY DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
Response to the
2002-2003 ORANGE COUNTY GRAND JURY REPORT
"Reversing Juvenile Recidivism"

Grand Jury Finding #14

The 2000-2001 Orange County Grand Jury reported on the State of Education in the Juvenile Justice System. Many of their recommendations were implemented or are in progress at the YFRC treatment centers. While the accumulative student information system, AERIES, is installed and operating at all centers, some teachers still experience delays in receiving and interpreting student information.

Department of Education Response: **AGREE**

A staff member has been assigned to contact the school districts and obtain student transcripts for students enrolled in the YFRC treatment centers. New enrollment procedures are in place to expedite teacher access to student information.

Grand Jury Finding #15

School libraries and recreational materials are almost nonexistent. Both the 1993-1994 Grand Jury and 2000-2001 Grand Jury defined in detail the need for library and recreational reading materials in the juvenile justice facilities.

Department of Education Response: **AGREE PARTIALLY**

Rio Contiguo will be holding a new library open house for students before March, 2003. Recreational reading carts are available and in operation for Rio Contiguo students as well. At Joplin, the library is in the process of being reorganized to better serve students. Each Friday, students have access to an optional reading program that encourages recreational reading. The Juvenile Hall facility, O.A. Fischer, has a reading cart program available to all students. This program is integrated into the school curriculum. The school library is in the final stages of being secured for student use. The Language Arts classroom provides students with recreational reading materials. Sustain Silent Reading and the Accelerated Reading programs are in place in support of reading among the students. Students are able to check out materials from the classroom to read in their dorms. However, as funding become available, both the Joplin and Los Piños institutions will be a high priority for library/media services.

Grand Jury Recommendation #13

Provide all teachers direct access to AERIES and give them training to interpret the information.

Department of Education Response:

One objective of the overall strategic plan for the Attendance and Records Center of the Alternative Education Division's ACCESS (Alternative Community, Correctional Educational Schools and Services) is to improve, enhance, and expand related services throughout the Division. A multi-phase plan was established to implement this objective.

1. The first phase in this plan is to replace the original student attendance and information system, SASI III, with the AERIES student attendance and information system (known as Eagle). This phase involves:
 - a. Installation of the software application
 - b. Synchronization and transfer of data from SASI III to the AERIES system
 - c. Training of "super users," who are primary personnel responsible for student data entry and operational tasks requiring the use of the student data (i.e., enrollment technicians).

Phase one began July 1, 2002, and completed in December 2002.

2. The second phase in this plan is to continue to add "secondary users," who are support or ancillary staff whose responsibilities include use of student data and/or limited data entry and act as support staff to the primary personnel ("super users").

Phase two began February 2003, and is on schedule for completion by June 30, 2003.

3. The third phase is the migration of the AERIES system to the teacher level. The plan at this time is for these users to have access to student data with no data entry responsibilities.

Phase three consists of the following stages:

- a. Technical, financial, and logistical planning

The first stage of technical, financial, and logistical planning has nearly been completed. Financial forecasting is being reviewed at this time due to current, complex California State Budget issues.

b. A pilot of the system migration

The second stage, the piloting of the actual system migration, is scheduled to begin July 1, 2003. This pilot will be conducted in two (2) of the eleven (11) PARs (Principal Administrative Region) and will consist of approximately 24 educational sites. Pending the completion of the technical specifications review, the two regions have tentatively been identified as Summit PAR and Pathways PAR, each containing 12 educational sites.

c. Program wide implementation

Pending a successful pilot, the third phase is scheduled to begin December 1, 2003. This stage is the continued migration of the student information system to the school site level across all ACCESS programs. This would consist of migrating each of the remaining nine (9) PARs, one at a time, onto the AERIES system. This process was selected to avoid staff training issues associated with the large number of teachers (approximately 360 within the Alternative Education division) and to allow for a concentrated effort regarding the technical and network solutions of the implementation process. A nine (9) month window has been designated for the completion of this stage, the division-wide migration. At fruition, this phase of the system migration would provide access to student information to all ACCESS teachers.

Grand Jury Recommendation #14

Provide library and recreational reading material for the YFRC schools.

Department of Education Response:

The California School Library Act of 1998, the funding source for our ALPHA Library project, requires that there be a dedicated school library space within each PAR in order to receive their funding. It has been difficult establishing dedicated space for libraries within the institutions served. Research shows that, "school libraries that are staffed with trained personnel make a difference in student test scores."

The O.A. Fischer (OAF) School Library, after establishing a Recreational Reading Program that started March 7, 2000, has suffered setbacks because of budgetary cutbacks. Library

Initiative funds have now taken the place of Probation funds to finance the books for the wards at this site. More than \$100,000 has been allocated from the ACCES/ALPHA library project for the OAF library. The academic library at this site is still on hold due to staffing issues and safety and security requirements for the physical space. In order to handle both the Recreational Reading program and a functioning school library academic program, more square footage needs to be allocated. The school staff conducts book talks and checks out books to the wards in the living units using large carts on wheels. Each cart holds 200-250 books. There is also a separate book cart dedicated to 75 different magazine titles that have been funded exclusively through Library Initiative money. An additional book order utilizing Library Initiative funds in the amount of \$25,000 has been compiled for this site and was forwarded to the vendor the first in February 2003.

The success of the Library Recreational Reading Program is commendable. We circulate books to minors from 14 book carts on a rotating basis. Our circulation statistics show that we circulated 2,500 books 23,599 times to 3,600 students in Juvenile Hall throughout the 2001 fiscal year. Actual circulation has increased to more than 25,000 per year.

The Rio Contiguo School Library will open its doors soon with trained personnel to staff the library and to ensure the safety and security of the contents. The physical space is secured and 85% of the books and videos are cataloged, bar coded and entered in the online catalog database. The old book collection at this site has been reviewed and updated. Paperback sets of UNIT reading books have been provided to the wards, and data entry for the creation of this library has been completed. The investment in time and materials at this site is well over \$100,000. Another \$25,000 is being allocated for book collection development. The new book order will be forwarded to the vendor during March 2003. This library site will be opened for students and staff by the end of March 2003.

Administrative staff has provided a database to the YFRC teachers of appropriate and suitable recreational reading books for students. Each YFRC was allocated \$500 for recreational reading materials to enrich the reading experience for their students. Material orders were placed in February 2003.

The issues for the libraries within the Institutions are:

- **Funding** OCDE/ACCESS – the budget from the state of California for books and materials is on hold and there may not be further allocations to school libraries or, if funded, reduced to \$5.33/ADA

- **Funding** Probation Department – contingent on further collaborative planning to continue the original partnership arrangement of sharing the cost center

The outlook is uncertain for refurbishing libraries at Joplin and Los Piños because the state budget precludes further expansion or enhancements for school library funds at the time. However, as funding become available, both institutions will be a high priority for library/media services.