



# Capistrano Unified School District

*Excellence in Education*

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August 11, 2008

Nancy Wieben Stock  
Presiding Judge of the Superior Court  
700 Civic Center Drive West  
Santa Ana, CA 92701

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**SUPERINTENDENT**

A. WOODROW CARTER

RE: Orange County Grand Jury Report  
*Are Charter Schools Getting Passing Grades?*

Dear Judge Wieben-Stock:

In accordance with California Penal Code sections 933 and 933.05, this letter is in response to the 2007-2008 Orange County Grand Jury Report entitled *Are Charter Schools Getting Passing Grades?*

**Findings**

Finding F-1: *Orange County charter schools meet the intent of the Education Code 47600-47664 by providing parents and pupils a choice in educational opportunities, emphasizing specific learning experiences, and aiding at-risk or academically low-achieving students.*

The Capistrano Unified School District (CUSD) agrees with Finding F-1. With three charter schools located within the boundaries of CUSD, the District provides parents and pupils a choice of educational opportunities.

Finding F-2: *The number of charter schools in Orange County is not growing commensurate with the overall growth of charter schools in California.*

The Capistrano Unified School District disagrees in part with this finding as it relates to CUSD. The Capistrano Unified School District is home to three charter schools out of the eleven public charter schools located in Orange County. CUSD has the second largest number of charter schools in the County. Consequently, CUSD supports the growth of charter schools in Orange County, as well as, California.

Finding F-3: *The Orange County school districts' oversight costs, in some districts, exceed the authorized 1% reimbursement.*

The Capistrano Unified School District agrees with Finding F-3. The oversight costs for the three charter schools located in the District far exceed the authorized 1% reimbursement.

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**Recommendations**

Recommendation R-1: *Orange County school districts and Orange County Superintendent of Schools continue to offer expanded choices for educational opportunities, as required in the State Education Code, by utilizing charter schools as an option to provide additional choices, especially for at-risk and academically low-achieving students.*

The Capistrano Unified School District agrees with this recommendation by offering choices of educational opportunities through district programs, as well as, charter schools.

Recommendation R-2: *The chartering authorities should follow the intent of the legislature by encouraging the establishment of charter schools by granting more charter school petitions provided they meet the State requirement.*

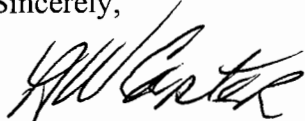
The Capistrano Unified School District has followed the intent of the legislature. The District has received three petition requests for charter schools. All three petitions met the State requirements and all three petitions were granted a charter. The criteria and procedures for obtaining a charter were established by the Capistrano Unified Board of Trustees when they approved and adopted Board Policy 0420.4 This policy was put in place in order to fairly and effectively review all charter school petition requests against the criteria provided by state law, regulations, and case law. Therefore, the Capistrano Unified School District is following the intent of the legislature by encouraging and supporting the establishment of charter schools.

Recommendation R-3: *Local school districts provide adequate oversight of charter schools even though State law does not allow for full reimbursement for such oversight.*

CUSD staff (Special Education, Facilities, Business Services, and Education) provides assistance and support to charter schools which exceed any oversight revenues. Charter schools have impacted the district by utilizing an extraordinary amount of district and school site staff time for assistance and oversight, especially in the area of special education.

If I may be of additional assistance, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Sincerely,



A. Woodrow Carter  
Superintendent