

Solano Middle School 2002-2003 Grand Jury Report

Reason for Investigation

Each year the Grand Jury visits a random selection of schools in the County.

Procedure

The Grand Jury:

- Toured school facilities
- Talked with administrators, teachers, support staff, students and parents
- Observed students in classes and moving from class-to-class
- Observed library, computer lab, gymnasium and classrooms
- Reviewed health, safety and emergency evacuation procedures

Background

1. Solano Middle School is located in Vallejo. The current school enrollment is approximately 948 students in the 6th-7th-8th grades. The school offers free or reduced cost breakfast and lunch programs to needy students under Title I. Participation in this program is low due to lack of parent support. Testimony indicated low parent involvement in school functions and activities.

2. The original campus is over 40 years old and has been augmented with portable classrooms. The school has never had a cafeteria. A central yard is used as a student gathering place and outdoor lunch room. Students eat in the gymnasium when weather is inclement.

3. The overall housekeeping of the campus is good. Everyday maintenance has been deferred. Examples: removal of graffiti, painting on walls and removal of broken glass in a display case.

4. Solano Middle School recently experienced an increase of Academic Performance Index (API) scores after the "I Believe" program was instituted by the Principal. This program is designed to instill morale, self confidence and character building in students. The goal for 2002-2003 is to increase API scores in reading/language arts and math. The school applied for a Comprehensive School Reform Demonstration grant in May 2002.

Findings and Recommendations

Each finding is referenced to the background paragraph number

Finding #1 - The Academic Performance Index scores have increased after the incentive program, "I Believe," was put in place at the school. (4)

Recommendation #1 - Continue the "I Believe" program.

Finding #2 - There is low parent involvement in school functions and activities. (1)

Recommendation #2 - Encourage more parents to become involved by giving them recognition.

Finding #3 - The school offers free or reduced cost breakfast and lunch programs. Few eligible students take advantage of this program. (1)

Recommendation #3 - Encourage parents and students to take advantage of these meal programs. Provide informational brochures about the program in appropriate languages representing the diverse ethnic makeup of students.

Finding #4 - The school has never had a cafeteria. Students eat outside or in the gymnasium. (2)

Recommendation #4 - Create an indoor cafeteria.

Affected Agencies

- Solano County Office of Education
 - Vallejo Unified School District
 - Solano Middle School
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