



Fairfield-Suisun Unified School District

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Jacki L. Cottingim, Ph.D.

August 29, 2008

The Honorable Ramona Garrett
Presiding Judge of the Superior Court
Solano County Superior Court
600 Union Avenue
Fairfield, California 94533

RE: 2007-2008 Grand Jury Report Entitled:
Fairfield-Suisun Unified School District Student Discipline

Dear Judge Garrett,

This letter constitutes the response of the Fairfield-Suisun Unified School District to the findings and recommendations of the 2007-2008 Solano County Grand Jury with respect to its investigation relating to student discipline issues within the District. For convenience, this response references those findings and recommendations in the order in which responses are requested by the report.

The Fairfield-Suisun Unified School District has collaborated with the Fairfield Police Department in response to the Grand Jury's request. The Fairfield-Suisun Unified School District has determined that the scope of their responses to the findings is limited to Findings 1, 2, 4, and 5. The Grand Jury's Findings and Recommendations are listed below, along with the District's response. As the newly appointed Superintendent of Fairfield-Suisun Unified School District I was not present during this investigation, however, I am generally familiar with our efforts to address the issues outlined by the Grand Jury. Thus, I am responding on behalf of the school district.

Finding 1:

The number of incidents involving student suspensions has increased in the middle and high schools of the Fairfield-Suisun Unified School District.

Recommendation 1:

The Fairfield-Suisun Unified School District should work with the faculty, staff, and parents to increase the number of intervention and support programs to prevent suspensions.

Response:

I have reviewed the number of suspensions occurring within our schools and my designee and I are currently working with faculty, staff, and parents to develop intervention and support programs in order to reduce the number of suspensions. The District is currently in the process of researching and reviewing intervention programs which address and support redirecting student behaviors while providing a continuum of support. Some of these interventions and support programs include, but are not limited to, the following:

- BEST (Building Effective Schools Together)
- Rachel's Challenge
- Character Counts
- Second Steps
- Setting Limits
- Student of the Week
- Student of the Month
- Parent Projects
- Safe Passage
- Site Level Counselors
- Peace Jam Solano
- Spirit
- Anger Management
- Smoking Cessation
- Substance Abuse Counseling
- Choices/Decision Making
- Violence Prevention

Finding 2:

On June 5, 2007 the City of Fairfield and several Rodriguez High School parents entered into a Settlement Agreement. This Agreement governs interactions between the Fairfield Police Department and high school students.

Recommendation 2:

Expand the principles underlying the Settlement Agreement to include part-time school Resource Officers at all middle and other high schools within the Fairfield-Suisun Unified School District.

Response:

The Fairfield-Suisun Unified School District supports the general principles set forth in the June 5, 2007 Agreement between the Fairfield Police Department and several Rodriguez parents. The District would hope that the Fairfield Police Department instructs all of its officers, including part-time Resource Officers, of the underlying principles of the Settlement Agreement. Crystal Middle School is the only secondary school not within the jurisdiction of the Fairfield Police Department. This school is under the jurisdiction of the Suisun City Police Department. As such, a copy of the Settlement Agreement between the Fairfield Police Department and the Rodriguez parents has been provided to the Suisun City Police Department, along with notice that the Fairfield-Suisun Unified School District supports the underlying principles of this Settlement Agreement. I can neither direct nor control the actions of the Suisun City Police, however, other than to provide them with the above-mentioned agreement and a statement of support.

Finding 3:

The provisions of this Settlement Agreement apply to members of the Fairfield Police Department who interact with students within the Fairfield-Suisun Unified School District.

Recommendation 3:

The Fairfield-Suisun Unified School District should work with other law enforcement agencies within the District to inform them about the underlying principles of the Settlement Agreement.

Response:

The response to this recommendation is contained within the response to Recommendation 2.

Finding 4:

The 2007-2008 Fairfield-Suisun Unified School District Parent/Student Handbook does not include the specific provisions for the Fairfield Police Department and its interactions with students.

Recommendation 4:

The Fairfield-Suisun Unified School District should ensure that the 2008-2009 Parent/Student Handbook includes the underlying principles of the Settlement Agreement.

Response:

The Fairfield-Suisun Unified School District has requested that the Fairfield Police Department prepare an insert to be distributed to current school year students and parents, which provides an explanation to students and their parents of the underlying principles of the Settlement Agreement. Once provided, the Police Department's insert will be distributed in a reasonable manner and timeframe.

Finding 5:

The provisions of the Settlement Agreement affecting the interactions between the Fairfield Police Department and students is for a term of four years.

Recommendation 5:

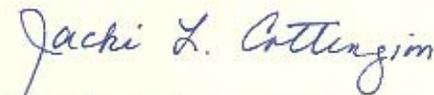
The Fairfield-Suisun Unified School District should evaluate the underlying principles of the Settlement Agreement to determine those principles that should be permanently adopted.

Response:

The Fairfield-Suisun Unified School District will establish a committee consisting of Administrators, Teachers and Resource Officers. Their collective responsibility will be to determine those underlying principles of the Settlement Agreement that can be permanently adopted by the Fairfield-Suisun Unified School district

I believe the comments set forth above are responsive to the requests of the Grand Jury.

Very truly yours,



Jacki Cottingim, Ph.D., Superintendent
Fairfield-Suisun Unified School District