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Youth Gangs in San Mateo County

Issue

What can be done to discourage youth from joining gangs?

Summary

The Grand Jury determined that with local youth and gang violence increasing, an investigation was appropriate. This investigation identifies existing programs in the county that appear to be effective in combating gangs and examines the critical features of effective programs that account for their success. *If we ask youth to say “No” to gangs, we need positive alternatives to which they can say “Yes”*

The Grand Jury sought statistics to support its work, but unfortunately, accurate statistics do not exist. The statistics that do exist are best estimates. Gang affiliation is not always obvious. Still, the County Probation Department estimated there were more than 1,300 gang members in 1991 and 3,000 in 1999 in 70 gangs. Since then, the discontinuation of gang task forces has resulted in an absence of reliable data. County law enforcement agencies believe that these numbers have continued to grow.

There are two basic approaches to combating gangs and gang activity: reactive and proactive. Reactive approaches involve the criminal justice system. Proactive approaches include educating youths, parents, teachers, and the community, and then providing alternative activities. Many challenges exist with either approach.

Preventive approaches involve both education and structuring of alternative activities. Educational programs aimed toward middle school youth can help them understand the negative aspects of joining gangs. Educational programs targeting teachers can help them recognize an “at-risk” student so that intervention can be initiated. Educational programs focused on parents can help them become more aware of the essential role they play in the lifestyle their child chooses.

An essential part of decreasing gang membership is to provide and promote activities for young people to enjoy during non-school hours. Such activities can occur in any number of settings and need not necessarily involve large numbers. County-wide Parks and Recreation Departments are important contributors to after-school activity programs.

The Grand Jury identified a set of common characteristics of successful programs that help prevent youth violence:

1. Clear, effective and consistent adult mentoring component.
2. Specific meeting location, close to target children
3. Specific identification of group to be served
4. Defined program with goals, desired outcomes, and consequences.
5. Sufficient number of leaders and mentors to whom the youth can easily relate.
6. Stable and adequate funding source

There is general agreement that San Mateo County must work much harder at preventing youth from joining gangs. It is cheaper and more effective to prevent the behavior rather than to react to it. Because the effects of prevention are less obvious and difficult to quantify, community support may not be easy to obtain.

The Grand Jury recommends that the Board of Supervisors should provide a centralized clearing-house of gang-related programs and information including a confidential hot line, ensure that statistical information be collected, and promptly schedule a second meeting of the Youth Violence Prevention workshop.

The Grand Jury also recommends that each school district should ensure that all employees and parents are informed about gangs, train and encourage school district employees to use the confidential hot line to report any student who exhibits "at risk" behavior, encourage the middle and/or high schools in the district to establish school activities and programs that provide gang prevention programs, and collaborate to create a single unified calendar that will allow police departments to identify which youth are truant and to enforce truancy policies.



Youth Gangs in San Mateo County

Issue

What can be done to discourage youth from joining gangs?

Background

To anyone who reads the local press, it is apparent that considerable gang activity exists in San Mateo County and that gangs are associated with violence, crime, and drug use. However, most citizens are relatively uninformed about how gangs function and why they appeal to certain youths. Citizens rely on the police to take care of the problem.

The Grand Jury determined that with local youth and gang violence increasing, an investigation was appropriate. This investigation identifies existing programs in the county that appear to be effective in combating gangs and examines the critical features of effective programs that account for their success. *If we ask youth to say "No" to gangs, we need positive alternatives to which they can say "Yes"*

Investigation

The Grand Jury interviewed prominent representatives of law enforcement and probation, a county supervisor, a former mayor, and representatives of various county organizations whose purpose is to encourage positive youth behavior. The Grand Jury surveyed police departments and school districts for their knowledge of and use of gang prevention programs.

Findings

The Grand Jury sought statistics to support its work, but unfortunately, accurate statistics do not exist. The statistics that do exist are best estimates. Gang affiliation is not always obvious. Still, the County Probation Department estimated there were more than 1,300 gang members in 1991 and 3,000 in 1999 in 70 gangs. Since then, the discontinuation of

gang task forces has resulted in an absence of reliable data. County law enforcement agencies believe that these numbers have continued to grow. A recent, disturbing trend is the increasing influence of prison gangs on our local street gang members.

County Probation and Police departments have developed useful background and cultural information about gangs. This information has proved helpful in understanding gangs, and is included in this report as Appendix A. A few highlights from that material follow:

Signs of gang involvement: use of one dominant color, disrespect for authority, poor school attendance, suspected drug use

High risk factors: absence of parental involvement, domestic violence or drug use in home, friends or relatives who belong to gangs, poverty.

Why youth join gangs: for protection, to establish identity and status, to belong to a peer group, money, to experience success, lack of positive alternatives

Methods for reducing street gang problems: the community should offer positive alternatives, intervention and prevention, educate parents and schools, aggressive enforcement.

Strong correlations exist between gang affiliation and poverty, drug use, violence, and truancy. Once someone is a gang member, it is very difficult to leave, as one's loyalty and commitment are to the gang.

Police in low-income areas such as sections of South San Francisco, Daly City, Redwood City, and San Mateo report significant efforts and expenditures to suppress street crime. The South San Francisco Police Department has developed its own Gang Task Force with a \$350,000 annual budget. It is part of the North County Gang Task Force. Redwood City has formed the Street Crime Suppression Team, with four officers on the street Tuesday through Saturday from 2:00 p.m. to midnight. Brisbane uses strike teams and street level enforcement in known gang areas to deter activity through zero tolerance.

Most police departments in San Mateo County report that gang membership and the violence associated with gang behavior is increasing. Although the East Palo Alto Police Department did not respond to the survey, local newspapers report significant gang activity in that community. The City Council and the newly hired police chief will have the responsibility to bring coherence and coordination to the anti-gang efforts. Even those cities that reported no gang activity in the Grand Jury's survey nevertheless stress the importance of informing themselves about gangs.

A San Mateo County Gang Action Team with funding from all the nearby cities meets monthly to exchange ideas and develop policy.

Police reported difficulties in helping schools with the truancy problem because districts use different school-year calendars. Youths on the street at any given hour or day may or may not be truants.

There are two basic approaches to combating gangs and gang activity: reactive and proactive. Reactive approaches involve the criminal justice system. Proactive approaches include educating youths, parents, teachers, and the community, and then providing alternative activities. Many challenges exist with either approach.

Handling criminal activity by teenagers is difficult. With current staffing levels the Probation Department faces significant challenges with an increasingly difficult workload, which includes an increase in gang activities and gang violence. In the past, youth service bureaus were used, but fewer of them now exist. There is seldom enough funding to handle properly those who commit less serious crimes. Rather, funds go towards the officer on the street. Even if it were always possible to respond appropriately to gang activity, the process is many times more costly than preventive programs and may have little effect on the amount of gang activity.

Preventive approaches involve both education and structuring of alternative activities. Educational programs aimed toward middle school youth can help them understand the negative aspects of joining gangs. Educational programs targeting teachers can help them recognize an “at-risk” student so that intervention can be initiated. Educational programs focused on parents can help them become more aware of the essential role they play in the lifestyle their child chooses.

Successful intervention programs require a pre-teen audience, one or more credible mentor figures, and a small-group setting. The county probation department currently supports such programs. High school students who are properly trained can tutor younger children and model positive behaviors. Other similar programs are Jericho Project, Drug Awareness Resistance Education (DARE), Gang Resistance Education and Training (GREAT), and PAL (Police Activities League).

An essential part of decreasing gang membership is to provide and promote activities for young people to enjoy during non-school hours. Such activities can occur in any number of settings and need not necessarily involve large numbers. Project Read, held at various libraries, is a good example that combines mentoring with academic success.

However, activities for large numbers of young people are essential. The Boys and Girls Club of East Palo Alto/Menlo Park/Redwood City serves 2,300 children ages 6-18. The Club has 75 employees who enforce rules of behavior. For example, homework is the first activity for children when they arrive after school. Other activities at the Club include theater, athletics, music, and games. It is a safe place where mentoring is a focus, where kids feel they belong, where rules are known, and there are no surprises.

The Grand Jury identified a set of common characteristics of successful programs that help prevent youth violence:

- Clear, effective and consistent adult mentoring component.
- Specific meeting location, close to target children
- Specific identification of group to be served
- Defined program with goals, desired outcomes, and consequences.

- Sufficient number of leaders and mentors to whom the youth can easily relate.
- Stable and adequate funding source

The various cities in the county all report attempts to structure activities for young people. A listing of some of these activities, compiled by the San Mateo County Parks and Recreation Department, is shown in Appendix B.

There are no countywide policies concerning cooperation and coordination of programs among school districts, law enforcement agencies, parks and recreation departments, or community organizations. An initial “Youth Violence Prevention Workshop” brainstorming session was convened in December 2004 by former Supervisor Mike Nevin and co-chaired by Parks and Recreation Director Marcia Raines. Attendees included representatives from police departments, the Sheriff’s Office, school districts, parks and recreation departments, churches, the probation department, and three Grand Jury observers. Its purpose was to create a collaboration of those groups and agencies in the county wishing to make a difference in the prevention of youth violence and crime. The group gathered and prioritized ideas to address its statement of purpose. The first stated priority is to establish a community awareness campaign, and the second is to involve and obtain commitment from the multi-cultural community and young people. They will expand the attendance to include community groups and gang members. A second meeting has not been held at this writing.

Conclusions

There is general agreement that San Mateo County must work much harder at preventing youth from joining gangs. It is cheaper and more effective to prevent the behavior rather than to react to it. Because the effects of prevention are less obvious and difficult to quantify, community support may not be easy to obtain. If young people are to grow up integrated successfully into society, the entire community must recognize gang-related problems and work to define and support solutions. *If we ask youth to say “No” to gangs, we need positive alternatives to which they can say “Yes”*

The two types of programs that can decrease gang affiliation are educational presentations and structured activity programs. Such prevention programs organized by the county exist but require additional funding to continue and to expand. Young people, beginning with all middle-school youth and even as young as the elementary grades, must be provided with prevention programs and be educated about the long-term implications of joining a gang.

Activity programs are equally essential. County-wide Parks and Recreation Departments are important contributors to after-school activity programs. The collaborative program, which they have organized and met for an initial brainstorming session, is an important step towards reducing youth violence. The Grand Jury commends them for this effort.

A coordinated systematic approach is necessary to deal with the gangs issue. At the present time, county departments and agencies are attempting to deal with the multifaceted gang problem in a disjointed operational and informational environment. There is no single location that either an individual or an agency can contact to determine the availability of anti-gang resources or programs. There is no contact point for teachers or others to report possible gang behavior or membership, nor is an intervention mechanism in place to follow up on such a report. Finally, there clearly needs to be a San Mateo County central data-gathering resource.

The general public may read newspaper accounts of gangs, but it is not aware of the extent of gang problems in San Mateo County. As a result, there is little public support, and only limited funds, for comprehensive violence prevention activities for youth.

Finally, the Grand Jury commends Probation Department, the Sheriff's Department, and the various city police departments for the education programs they have been conducting. These programs should be continued, and the number of presentations increased.

Recommendations

1. The Board of Supervisors and the Sheriff should:
 - 1.1 Provide a centralized clearing-house of gang-related programs and information. A confidential hot line for reporting suspected gang activity or membership is an essential component of this program.
 - 1.2 Ensure that statistical information be collected on a countywide basis in order to measure the problem and the success or failure of the various efforts to curtail it.
 - 1.3 Promptly schedule a second meeting of the Youth Violence Prevention Workshop.
2. Each school district should:
 - 2.1 Ensure that all employees and parents are informed about gangs. A copy of "The Who, How, and Why of Youth Gangs" (Appendix A) should be given to all employees and parents.
 - 2.2 Train and encourage school district employees to use the recommended confidential hot line to report, to the extent permitted by law, any student who exhibits "at risk" behavior.
 - 2.3 Encourage the middle and/or high schools in the district to establish school activities and programs that provide gang prevention programs.

2.4 Collaborate to create a single calendar that will allow police departments to identify which youth are truant and to enforce truancy policies.

APPENDIX A

The Who, How and Why of Youth Gangs

A “gang” is any ongoing organization, association, or group of 3 or more persons, having a common name or identifying sign or symbol, whose members engage in a pattern of specific criminal street gang activity such as:

Assault with a deadly weapon	Robbery
Murder	Narcotic sales
Shooting at an inhabited building or vehicle	Arson
Shooting or permitting shooting from a vehicle	Witness or victim intimidation
Burglary	Grand theft
Vehicle theft	Rape
Looting	Money Laundering
Kidnapping	Mayhem
Torture	Extortion
Felony vandalism	Carjacking
Possession of a firearm by a minor	Sale or transfer of firearm to minor

It is a combination of warning signs, high risk factors, and clothing styles that may indicate an individual is involved with a gang. No single item can be definitive.

Signs of Gang Involvement

- Change in attitude about school or hobbies
- Poor school attendance and grades, habitual truancy and class cutting
- Change in hairstyle or dress, new friends with same hair style or dress
- Tattoo anywhere on body
- Pierced lips, nipples, belly button
- Acts of violence, possession of weapons
- Consistent wearing of red, blue, or other specific colors
- Refusal to wear other specific colors
- Use of nicknames, gang terminology or hand signs
- Graffiti writing on books, papers, personal belongings.
- Disrespect of teacher’s authority and school rules, disrespect of parent’s authority
- Frequent use of abusive language
- Secretive behavior about friends and activities and stays out late at night
- Suspected drug use, perhaps indicated by mood changes
- New fear of police

High Risk Factors for Gang Membership

- Domestic violence in the home
- Substance abuse in the home
- Youth poorly supervised before and after school
- Parents have little or no interaction with youth
- Low self esteem

Parents have permissive attitude toward gangs and drugs
Family member or friends in a gang
Living in an area claimed by a gang (recruiting/fear)
Youth attends school where a gang is currently recruiting

Why do youth join a gang?

Sense of friendship, camaraderie
To experience a kind of success, especially if they experience failure at school
Fear for their safety; believe a gang gives them protection
Peer pressure
Lack of positive alternative activities
Breakdown of the traditional family
Family member is in a gang
Excitement, thrills

What is the purpose of gang graffiti?

Graffiti is the most visible indication of gang activity in a neighborhood. Gang members scribble their names or their gang's name on fences, shop walls, street signs, vehicles, and even homes. Graffiti can tell a story, list a gang's members, or issue a challenge to another gang. Gangs hope that their graffiti will draw attention to themselves and to what they consider their territory and will intimidate the neighborhood and rival gangs.

Describe some gang clothing styles. (These are constantly changing)

Red or blue web style belts	Belt buckles with "S" or "N" on them
Red or blue bandanas or shoe laces	Baseball cap with gang name on it
Burning of skin with cigarettes or lighters	Wearing spiked collars or wrist bands
Gang name, XIII, XIV, 3 or 4 dots on clothing	Consistent wearing of one color
Clothing with messages of "Jesus is dead", racial hate messages, or swastikas	

Female gang members wear:

Norteños: Eyeliner makeup curling up and four earrings on one ear.

Sureños: Eyeliner makeup curling down and three earrings on one ear.

The largest contributors to the street gang problem in California are:

Breakdown of the family – lack of parental control
Inability of family to recognize a youth's involvement.
Lack of positive role model
Availability of drugs and guns
Glorification of gangs by media
Leniency of courts

How can our community reduce street gang problems?

Provide alternatives
Intervention and prevention programs
Educate parents, schools, youth, and community
Aggressive enforcement

APPENDIX B

Some Programs Used by San Mateo County Communities to Provide Alternative Activities for Young People

Belmont	<p><i>Middle School Sports Program</i> with \$8500 contributed annually</p> <p><i>Middle School dances</i> with staff assisted by members of V.O.I.C.E.S. teen program</p>
Brisbane	<p><i>Teen sports programs</i></p> <p><i>Part-time job opportunities</i> for local teens, often with recommendation from police. So this is used as a diversion program.</p>
Burlingame	<p><i>YAC (Youth Advisory Committee)</i>, offering positive alternatives to undesirable behaviors.</p> <p><i>Emphasis on partnerships</i> among schools, churches, service organizations, city departments, city council.</p>
Daly City	<p><i>Homework centers</i> for 3rd-6th grades. Provide a safe location where help is easily available, with high school students sometimes serving as mentors.</p> <p><i>Teen Leadership Challenge Retreat</i> has been held annually since 1991. This is a weekend away for students identified by teachers as potential leaders through either positive or negative actions. Straight A students work next to students who needed permission from the San Mateo County Probation Department to attend.</p>
Foster City	<p><i>VIBE Youth Center</i>, open 3-7 weekdays and weekend nights 8-11.</p> <p><i>YAC (Youth Advisory Committee)</i> represents 7 schools. Workshops on dealing with bullying, violence and harassment.</p> <p><i>Partnership Examples:</i> Library, Chamber of Commerce, youth sports groups, Rotary, Lions Club, Bowditch Middle School, F.C. Police Dept.</p>
Pacifica	<p><i>Teen Volunteers</i> with partial funding from No. Calif. Grantmakers Assoc.</p> <p><i>L.I.T.E.S. (Leaders in Training Education)</i> for early teens offering work experience through community service.</p> <p><i>Weekday after-school program:</i> partnering with P.T.A. and Daly City Parks and Rec, sponsored by Pacifica Collaborative and Service Clubs.</p> <p><i>PAY (Positive Alternatives for Youth)</i> collaborates with community resources to reach middle and high school teens who can benefit from structured guidance and who need academic assistance.</p>
Redwood City	<p><i>After school programs on 7 school sites</i> include life skills, academic enrichment and recreational programming. Partners include R.C. Elementary School District, R.C. Family Centers, R.C. 2020, R.C. PAL,</p>

San Carlos	Sequoia YMCA. Parks and Recreation partnerships featuring a homework center with high school students as tutors and mentors.
South San Francisco	<i>Middle School Program</i> to keep students involved in after-school activities. Cooperative effort with So.S.F. Unified School District, So.S.F. Police Dept. and the So. S.F. Recreation and Community Services Dept.
San Mateo	<i>Middle School "All-City" Dances</i> <i>Scholarships:</i> Provides full or partial scholarships to economically disadvantaged youth to enable them to participate in all recreation activities. In FY '03-'04, 4,220 registrations with total value of \$140,000. <i>Martin Luther King Center,</i> drop-in for elementary children offering a place for homework, some computers, and a tutorial program. <i>PAL (Police Athletic League):</i> collaborative program between police and park & rec targets high-risk youth. Supports case-managed youth that are diverted from juvenile justice system.

Response to the Grand Jury for both BRISBANE and BAYSHORE School Districts.

BRISBANE SCHOOL DISTRICT

One Solano Street
Brisbane, CA 94005

BAYSHORE SCHOOL DISTRICT

One Martin Street
Daly City, CA 94014

August 3, 2005

Hon. Norman J. Gatzert
Judge of the Superior Court
Hall of Justice
400 County Center; 2nd Floor
Redwood City, CA 94063-1655

Re: Response to the Grand Jury: YOUTH GANGS

Dear Judge Gatzert:

Please find the responses to the recent Grand Jury recommendations for Bayshore and Brisbane School districts. As preface to the response, it is the opinion of the administrators of the two districts that gang membership has not been and is not currently a problem in our schools:

- 2.1 *Ensure that all employees and parents receive a copy of the sheets titled, "The Who, How, and Why of Youth Gangs."* The districts do not agree that it is useful to provide the leaflet to all parents and teachers. We do agree that it is useful to provide the information to the parents and teachers of our upper grade students. We agree to provide the information to parents and teachers of students in grades five through eight with our back-to-school packets of information.
- 2.2 *Train and encourage the use of the hotline.* The districts agree that such a line could be useful. Should the Board of Supervisors create such a line and notify our districts of its existence, the districts will, within sixty days, provide the information to teachers and other staff.
- 2.3 *Encourage middle schools to create activities and programs that include gang prevention.* The districts agree with this recommendation. Within the resources

we have, our middle schools do offer programs for seventh graders that include alternatives to gang membership.

- 2.4 *Collaborate to create a single calendar.* Our districts partially agree with this recommendation. We agree that a common calendar would assist law enforcement, should law enforcement decide to enforce mandatory attendance laws on the few days of each year that are now uniform. On the other hand, one of the strengths of the many districts in San Mateo County is the ability of districts to be responsive to their local community customs and norms. The state continues to reduce the ability of local communities to govern their own school districts. This reduction in community responsibility alienates community members, reduces teacher creativity, and strangles administrators with waves of unclear and overarching restrictions that detract from the core responsibilities of schools in our society. Our districts have tried to develop calendars that work well for the children, parents and teachers of the community. Other districts have chosen year-round programs for their communities. We work in common with other districts when possible. We do not want the potential value of a common calendar offset by its negative effects.

Sincerely,

Steve Waterman

Belmont-Redwood Shores Elementary School District

2960 Hallmark Drive
Belmont, CA 94002-2999

John T. McIntosh
Superintendent

Telephone (650) 637-4800
FAX (650) 637-4811

The 2004-2005 Grand Jury report on Youth Gangs in San Mateo County Schools included a number of findings and recommendations. Based on my conversations with district principals in the Belmont-Redwood Shores School District, I offer the following response to the recommendations of the Grand Jury report.

Findings:

While there has been no specific signs of an increase in youth and gang violence on the 5 elementary and one middle school campuses in the Belmont-Redwood Shores School District, teachers and principals have targeted preventive and educational strategies to help our youth understand the negative aspects of joining gangs.

At Ralston Middle School, some evidence of “wanna be” behavior exists with students wearing red or occasionally bringing a red or blue bandana to school. In 2004-2005 there were four incidents of graffiti on school walls or lockers. There is some relationship between these few incidents and students who are in minority groups. The staff views these as attempts by these students to identify to their group in a largely white and Asian student population.

Recommendations:

- ❖ Copies of “The Who, How and Why of Youth Gangs” have been made available to parents at all school sites, and were specifically offered to parents attending the Ralston Middle School ‘Back-to-School’ night on September 29, 2005.
- ❖ Teachers and parents are encouraged to report any ‘at risk’ behavior to the Ralston School Counselor, principal, assistant principal or dean of students.
- ❖ A wide array of after school sports, extra curricular clubs, and homework clubs are offered four days a week at the Ralston campus through the school year
- ❖ Belmont Police Department and the district have collaborated to provide a School Resource Officer who is on-site at Ralston for four days a week.
- ❖ Concerns about students at-risk and students who are chronically absent or tardy are shared with the administrative staff and the School Resource Officer.
- ❖ The AVID program at the middle school targets students who, for reasons out side of their control, may not have the opportunity to go to college. The curriculum includes discussion and suggestions for alternative activities to drugs and violence.
- ❖ The 7th and 8th grade Health curriculum devote an entire unit to drug education, sex and the reproductive system, and the dangers of gangs.
- ❖ Positive behavior and improvement are celebrated each trimester with an awards assembly

Burlingame School District

September 19, 2005

Hon. Norman J. Gatzert
Judge of the Superior Court
Hall of Justice
400 County Center, 2nd Floor
Redwood City, CA 94063-1655

RE: Grand Jury Report: Youth Gangs in San Mateo County

Dear Judge Gatzert:

The Burlingame School District Board of Trustees has asked that I respond to the Grand Jury Report on Youth Gangs in San Mateo County.

Currently there is no evidence of gang activity within the Burlingame School District. The Burlingame School District, however, has developed a partnership with the City of Burlingame and, as a part of this partnership, the Burlingame Police Department has designated a police liaison officer who works directly with the Burlingame School District. The District also works with the police department to resolve disciplinary issues when appropriate. Through this partnership the District also works closely with the Recreation Department to provide a variety of after school programs for students.

The Burlingame School District agrees partially with the findings. The following are the responses from the Burlingame School District.

Recommendation 1: Ensure that all employees and parents are informed about gangs. A copy of "The Who, How, and Why of Youth Gangs" should be given to all employees and parents.

The District has developed policies and regulations to help keep the District free from gangs that advocate disruptive behavior. These documents provide information on techniques to discourage the influence of gangs and how to encourage positive behavior.

In addition, parent education workshops are provided through the PTA Council.

Also, as a part of its curriculum, the Burlingame School District offers Bully Proofing, Tribes (a program designed to promote community in the classroom and throughout the school) and the GREAT Program (Gang Resistance Education and Training).

The District does not fully agree with the recommendation to distribute a copy of "The Who, How, and Why of Youth Gangs" to all employees and parents. The District is not sure of the effectiveness of distributing this document and feels the District would be better served by utilizing funds to provide real people assistance.

Recommendation 2: Train and encourage school district employees to use the recommended confidential hot line to report, to the extent permitted by law, any student who exhibits "at risk" behavior.

The District would need to receive more information regarding a “confidential hot line” to determine if its use would be appropriate for the Burlingame School District. Currently, counselors are available at Burlingame Intermediate School to help counsel students, while principals are available at each of the elementary schools. “At risk behavior” is brought to the counselor’s attention (at the Intermediate School) and to the principal’s attention (at the elementary schools). Once a report on behavioral issues has been brought to the attention of the appropriate individual, the situation is investigated and appropriate disciplinary action is taken. Counselors, administrators, parents, and the police, if necessary, are involved in the process.

Recommendation 3: Encourage the middle and/or high school in the district to establish school activities and programs that provide gang prevention programs.

The Burlingame School District and the City of Burlingame, including the Burlingame Recreation Department, have established a partnership. Through this partnership, a variety of programs are offered to students by the Recreation Department and a number of these activities are held on the Burlingame Intermediate School campus. These include both athletic and academic enrichment programs. Burlingame Intermediate School offers the START Program (Students Taking Action and Responsibility Towards their Future) in seventh grade in conjunction with the Burlingame Police Department. This program offers classes on Drug Education, Student Safety and Violence and Suspension and Expulsion. The Burlingame Police Department Liaison Officer provides the instruction for the START Program.

Recommendation 4: Collaborate to create a single calendar that will allow police departments to identify which youth are truant and to enforce truancy policies.

The collective bargaining units negotiate the Burlingame School District Calendar with the District. School year calendars are consistent at each site and all schools within the Burlingame School District start and end on the same day and follow the same holiday schedule. The Burlingame School District offers one and a half staff development days to teachers, which are non-student days. These dates are the same at each site. The Burlingame School District has also attempted to work with the high school district in an effort to provide consistencies in schedules for families who have students in elementary, middle and high school. This however has not always been possible.

We hope this response provided the Grand Jury with needed information. If you have any questions or concerns, please contact me.

Sincerely,
Sonny H. Da Marto, Ed. D.
Superintendent

CABRILLO UNIFIED SCHOOL DISTRICT
498 Kelly Avenue, Half Moon Bay, CA 94019

September 14, 2005

Hon. Norman J. Gatzert
Judge of the Superior Court
Hall of Justice
400 County Center, 2nd Floor
Redwood City, CA 94063-1655

Re: Report on Youth Gangs in San Mateo County

Honorable Judge Gatzert,

The Cabrillo Unified School District is in agreement with the findings of the San Mateo County Grand Jury regarding how to decrease gang-related activities in the community. In meeting the needs of the report, the Cabrillo Unified School District would like to point out to the Grand Jury that many of the activities listed in Appendix B of the Grand Jury Report are already being implemented in the Cabrillo Unified School District boundary areas thanks to the assistance of the San Mateo County Sheriff's Office, the Half Moon Bay Police Department and the San Mateo County Probation Department. All of these agencies are consistently providing advice to the district and community regarding how to reduce gang-related activities.

The Cabrillo Unified School District does inform its employees and parents about gangs and the related activities that may occur in the community. With the assistance of the appropriate agencies the school district provides staff development and training about gang-related activities. Unfortunately, school districts do not have enough funds to provide sufficient recreational resources for students. The lack of funds for after school activities is a great concern of the Cabrillo Unified School District. There is enough evidence that clearly indicates that if young people are actively engaged, they will be less likely to be affected by negative influences.

I appreciate the Grand Jury's time and information with regards to this issue.

Sincerely,

John Bayless, Ed.D.
Superintendent

/rc

cc: Clerk, CUSD Governing Board
Members, CUSD Governing Board



COUNTY OF SAN MATEO
Inter-Departmental Correspondence

County Manager's Office

DATE: September 12, 2005
BOARD MEETING DATE: September 20, 2005
SPECIAL NOTICE: None
VOTE REQUIRED: None

TO: Honorable Board of Supervisors
FROM: John L. Maltbie, County Manager
SUBJECT: 2004-05 Grand Jury Response

Recommendation

Accept this report containing the County's responses to the following 2004-05 Grand Jury reports on Youth Gangs in San Mateo County, San Mateo County Indigent Health Care, and Adult Protective Services and Public Guardian.

Vision Alignment:

Commitment: Responsive, effective and collaborative government.

Goal 20: Government decisions are based on careful consideration of future impact, rather than temporary relief or immediate gain.

This activity contributes to the goal by ensuring that all Grand Jury findings and recommendations are thoroughly reviewed by the appropriate County departments and that, when appropriate, process improvements are made to improve the quality and efficiency of services provided to the public and other agencies.

Discussion

The County is mandated to respond to the Grand Jury within 90 days from the date that reports are filed with the County Clerk and Elected Officials are mandated to respond within 60 days. It is also the County's policy to provide periodic updates to the Board and the Grand Jury on the progress of past Grand Jury recommendations requiring ongoing or further action. To that end, attached is the County's responses to the Grand Jury's reports on Youth Gangs in San Mateo County issued on June 23, 2005, and San Mateo County Indigent Health Care and Adult Protective Services and Public Guardian issued June 29, 2005.

Youth Gangs in San Mateo County

Findings:

Generally agree with the Grand Jury's finding that the County lacks a centralized, comprehensive source for gang activity statistics. The San Mateo County Gang Action Team, which is made up of representatives from city police departments and County criminal justice departments, has been an effective resource for sharing information across jurisdictional boundaries. Additional work must be done to quantify, in a meaningful way, the level and type of gang-related activity occurring in the county.

Recommendations:

1.0 The Board of Supervisors and the Sheriff should:

- 1.1 Provide a centralized clearing-house of gang-related programs and information. A confidential hot line for reporting suspected gang activity or membership is an essential component of this program.**

Response: Agree. The Sheriff has agreed to work with the Board of Supervisors and the San Mateo County Police Chiefs and Sheriff's Association to study the feasibility of creating a centralized clearinghouse of gang-related programs and information, as well as a confidential hot line for reporting suspected gang activity. The study would include the cost of creating, maintaining and operating these systems and determine the level of interest among city and county criminal justice departments in sharing these costs and participating in the ongoing data gathering and input processes.

- 1.2 Ensure that statistical information be collected on a countywide basis in order to measure the problem and the success or failure of the various efforts to curtail it.**

Response: Agree. This recommendation supports the objective of recommendation 1.1 above. For policy makers to make informed decisions on the success or failure of programs, the statistical information compiled must be complete and accurate. This will require the cooperation of all criminal justice agencies in San Mateo County and uniform data collection and reporting practices.

- 1.3 Promptly schedule a second meeting of the Youth Violence Prevention Workshop.**

Response: Agree. Supervisors Adrienne Tissier and Jerry Hill convened meetings of the Youth Violence Prevention Workshop on July 18 and August 15, 2005. The next meeting is scheduled for October 3, 2005. The Workshop's focus is to reduce youth violence and crime through collaborative methods and programs involving law enforcement, education, parks and recreation agencies, and community-based organizations.

Hillsborough City School District
300 El Cerrito Avenue
Hillsborough, CA 94010

(Original letter submitted lost in the mail)

July 12, 2005

Grand Jury
County of San Mateo
Hall of Justice
400 County Center
Redwood City, CA 94063-1655

The Trustees of the Hillsborough City School District have asked me to respond to the Grand Jury Report on the presence of Youth Gangs in San Mateo County. This school district enjoys a very close working relationship with the Hillsborough Police Department. When disciplinary situations arise the school district and the police department often find it is to our mutual benefit to work closely together to resolve the situations. With that in mind, we have checked with the police and we believe that there is no gang activity in any of our public schools in Hillsborough. We will remain vigilant and continue to support the kinds of programs that give youth alternative, productive activities that provide for the development of positive self esteem and provide safe havens for youth to congregate in after school hours.

Recommendation one for school districts is to make sure that employees and parents are informed about gangs. It is the practice of this school district to work with our police department and to inform all of our stakeholders about the various threats to their security. Included in this is any possible gang activity. We would be happy to provide any literature to our stakeholders which assist us in this goal.

Recommendation number two asks us to encourage our employees to report any at risk behavior on a confidential hot line. Our employees would need to be aware of any Due Process rights associated with making such a report, and the term "at risk behavior" would have to be fully described. At present whenever a behavior we define as at risk occurs, the school principal and counselor receive the report of this behavior, investigate what is reported, involve parents in this process and the police, if necessary. At all times we respect the Constitutional rights of the individuals involved. Until this district was certain that a similar procedure was in place for any reported activity to an outside agency we will continue to ask our employees to follow the procedures outlined above.

Recommendation three asks that the district establish programs and activities to prevent gang involvement. This school district and the Town of Hillsborough have created a Recreation department through a joint powers agreement. This department is operated by the school district with the majority of its funding being fee based while some financial subsidy is provided by the Town and the school district. One of the purposes of the many

programs this department offers is to provide healthy activities after school for our students. Many of the programs offered are instructed by school district personnel. In addition, Crocker School offers the Crocker Connection, a Kent Award winning program which prepares our students for transition to the high school. School activities are varied and include extended field trips which allow students opportunities to build self esteem. We are fortunate to have counselors on all of our campuses whose task it is to work with any negative behaviors so that positive self esteem for all children is promoted. Additionally, character education is a part of the curriculum at each of our schools. This program has been so successful that West School was one of four schools in the nation to be selected as a National School of Character. By coordinating our curriculum and our activities to promote positive self esteem we believe this is the best kind of prevention program one can create.

Recommendation four asks that all school districts create a single calendar so truancy may be identified. The calendars of each school district are negotiable items under the collective bargaining act of this State. For that reason, each district has a different number of days that students come to school and a different number of days that employees work. These calendars respond to the priorities established by the unions and try to take into account the needs of the families of the districts. Since each district in this county has different needs and family priorities the calendars reflect these characteristics. In Hillsborough we start school in August before Labor Day and continue until the second full week in June. This allows us to have additional travel days connected to the major holiday breaks in the school year, something desired by our community. It also allows us to have staff development days spread throughout the calendar to teach staff the skills they need to enhance the instructional program, a pattern which educational research says is the most beneficial way to conduct staff development if you want to see improvement in the classroom. Often these staff development days require the assistance of personnel from the County Office of Education. Since each district has different staff development needs and since there are a limited number of county personnel available to assist us, the optimum condition is to have each district have its localized staff development on different days. This district attempts to coordinate its calendar with the high school district into which our students matriculate and finds that a very difficult task because of union involvement and the differing needs of the two districts. Therefore, for the reasons stated above it would be virtually impossible to coordinate school district calendars and maintain the integrity of local control and compliance with state law.

We hope this response provided the Grand Jury with needed information. If you have any questions or concerns please contact me.

Sincerely,

/s/ Marilyn Loushin-Miller

Marilyn Loushin-Miller
Superintendent
Hillsborough City School District



Jefferson School District

Martin Luther King Jr. Education Center
101 Lincoln Ave. • Daly City, CA 94015
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Governing Board
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Superintendent
Barbara B. Wilson, Ph.D.

RESPONSE TO GRAND JURY – 2004-2005

YOUTH GANGS IN SAN MATEO COUNTY

The Jefferson School District agrees with the findings of the Youth Gangs in San Mateo County report. We have the following responses to the report's recommendations.

2.1 Ensure that all employees and parents are informed about gangs.

The Jefferson School District will distribute Appendix A to all parents/guardians and employees beginning with the 2005-2006 school year.

2.2 Train and encourage school district employees to use the recommended confidential hot line to report, to the extent permitted by law, any student who exhibits "at risk" behavior.

The recommendation will not be implemented. Employees currently notify their immediate supervisor to report students who exhibit "at-risk" behavior. Since gang activity occurs after school hours, it is recommended that local police departments establish a hot line for the community.

2.3 Encourage middle and/or high schools in the district to establish school activities and programs that provide gang prevention programs.

There has been an ongoing focus on gang prevention and implementation of positive alternative programs at each of our three middle schools.

2.4 Collaborate to create a single calendar that will allow police departments to identify which youth are truant and to enforce truancy policies.

Our District annually prepares and distributes a calendar at the beginning of each school year. The calendar will be placed on our Website beginning with the 2005-2006 school year.



Jefferson Union High School District

ADMINISTRATIVE OFFICES – SERRAMONTE DEL REY

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Daly City, California 94015-4132
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Board of Trustees

Jean E. Brink
Rachel P. Juliana
Maria S. Luna
David K. Mineta
Thomas A. Nuris

Michael J. Crilly
Superintendent

August 24, 2005

The Honorable Norman J. Gatzert
Judge of the Superior Court
Hall of Justice
400 County Center, 2nd Floor
Redwood City, California 94063-1655

RE: YOUTH GANGS IN SAN MATEO COUNTY REPORT

Dear Judge Gatzert:

This letter is in response to your request for the Jefferson Union High School District's review and formal response to portions of the Grand Jury's Report on Youth Gangs. The Jefferson Union High School District has reviewed the document and agrees that it is a complex issue and one that requires the support of a number of parties including parents and families.

The following are responses to the specific findings:

- 2.1 Ensure that all employees and parents are informed about gangs. A copy of "The Who, How and Why of Youth Gangs" (Appendix A) should be given to all employees and parents.

We believe that the involvement of employees and parents is important. In recent years, we have provided similar summaries of risk behaviors to enlighten parents and staff as to the signs of gang behavior. High school teachers are well aware of this, but parents to a lesser extent recognize the signs. In supporting the recommendation, we will be sure that principals review this information with faculties in a manner which makes most sense for the school. Likewise, we will endeavor to make the information available to parents via the regular parent newsletters or other appropriate school communication channels.

- 2.2 Train and encourage school district employees to use the recommended confidential hot line to report, to the extent permitted by law, any student who exhibits "at risk" behavior.

The district disagrees with the recommendation that the confidential hot line for district staff to report students with "at risk" behaviors is the most effective method. Hot lines seem to have an initial value but then fall out of favor. Its availability would be communicated, but personal communication to the site

administration would be promoted. The Jefferson Union High School District uses a system established in each school where concerns are expressed in person, by e-mail, by phone or voicemail to the Special Services Counselor, High School Principal or Vice Principal or Campus Supervisor. This system has provided very effective, productive and accurate sources of information when used, and has served the school and students well. We believe there should be a variety of contacts available, not just one single vehicle.

- 2.3 Encourage the middle and/or high schools in the district to establish school activities and programs that provide gang prevention programs.

The Jefferson Union High School District agrees that schools should provide gang prevention activities as part of the instructional program. Each of our schools have taken steps to institute practices and services directed at gang prevention and reduction. We remain committed to this.

Twice a year selected students in our schools participate in the Daly City Youth Leadership Challenge Retreat. This reaches approximately 150 youth per year and has been in existence for nearly 15 years. This program is a collaboration with the school district and the City of Daly City with funding coming directly through the City Council. It was established as a positive deterrent to gang affiliation.

The Jefferson Union High School District also agrees that more positive activities need to be available for students. However, these programs cannot be funded from the meager funds provided to the "revenue limit" high schools in San Mateo County. Schools are very much driven by the academic targets established by the State; penalties result for failure to reach these targets. As a result, fewer dollars are directed toward district athletic programs, student activities, and other co-curricular efforts which provide positive after school activities and divert youth from gang activity. "Revenue limit" districts such as ours have \$2,000 to \$2,500 less per student and cannot be expected to provide equal services to "Basic Aid" districts. While the Jefferson Union High School District believes these are very important and critical services to any school, the funding is simply not available.*

**the majority of high schools in San Mateo County are "Basic Aid" having substantially more funding available for programs and services than JUHSD..*

The Honorable Norman J. Gatzert
August 24, 2005
Page 3

- 2.4 Collaborate to create a single calendar that will allow police departments to identify which youth are truant and to enforce truancy policies.

The Jefferson Union High School District agrees that a single school calendar would simplify some issues for the police; however, it presents a horrendous task to have all entities agree on such an issue. Most districts would agree to this as long as the chosen calendar was their own. Calendars are established to fit the needs of individual districts.

The State has established the minimum number of school days, but teacher contracts in some districts increase these days. Most districts begin prior to Labor Day, but this fluctuates from year to year and creates additional labor costs when specific staff are asked to begin in August. It is ideal for high schools to start earlier and align with the community college calendar; however, teacher unions must be part of this discussion.

If you are in need of any additional information regarding these responses, please do not hesitate to contact my office at 650-550-7969.

Sincerely,

Michael J. Crilly
Superintendent

c Board of Trustees



LA HONDA-PESCADERO UNIFIED SCHOOL DISTRICT
P.O. Box 189 • 620 North Street, Pescadero, CA 94060
650-879-0286 • FAX 650-879-0816

Timothy A. Beard, Superintendent

A Lighthouse District

September 27, 2005

Hon. Norman J. Gatzert
Judge of the Superior Court
Hall of Justice
400 County Center, 2nd floor
Redwood City, CA 94063-1655

Dear Judge Gatzert:

This letter is in response to the 2004-05 County Grand Jury report on “Youth Gangs in San Mateo County”. The La Honda-Pescadero Unified School District has considered the Grand Jury’s findings and submits this letter in response to the recommendations to school districts.

Our school district, which has an enrollment of only 375 students, covers a large geographical area along the southern coast of San Mateo County. Because of our isolation and the lack of local services in this part of the county, we rely heavily on county agencies and community groups for support and assistance if serious problems arise in our schools. For example, the County Sheriff Department helped us set up a mutual aid radio communication system to keep our students safe on the school buses.

Although the district is concerned about the rise of youth and gang violence in the county, there have been no dramatic instances of gang activity in our schools. However, we are well aware that our schools are not immune from the negative influences of drugs, violence, and crime. We are alert to the need to be proactive in combating gangs and gang activity.

Recommendation # 2.1 asks us to ensure that employees and parents are informed about gangs. We will distribute the information “The Who, How and Why of Youth Gangs” you provided us in English. However, we need more resources—human and informational, in English and Spanish—to help us reach all parents in culturally appropriate ways that will really make a difference.

Recommendation # 2.2 asks us to train employees to use a hot line to report any student who exhibits “at risk” behavior. While we agree that county-wide data is valuable, we disagree that this one-way communication of reporting our students’ behavior is accurate in identifying gang membership or effective in preventing gang activity. We need county assistance in gathering and tracking data that will be used appropriately in our schools. And we need to be assured that the assistance we currently receive from county law enforcement to address concerns about our students will continue.

Recommendation # 2.3 asks us to establish gang prevention programs in our middle school and high school. We will continue to work with the Sheriffs Department to support the DARE and GREAT Programs in our middle school. We

will continue to work with our staff on gang awareness so that we can enforce the school dress code and provide individual counseling to students who exhibit “at risk” behavior. We will continue to work with local and county resources to bring tobacco, drug and gang awareness to all our students. We will continue to search for resources to provide after school activities and meaningful opportunities for civic engagement for our students.

Recommendation # 2.4 asks schools to create a single calendar to help police departments to identify truant students and enforce truancy policies. There are just too many variables across school districts, including contractual agreements, program options and community needs, for the idea of a single school calendar throughout the county to be realistic.

The Grand Jury is to be commended for its courage in raising the issue of gangs. However, as the report itself implies, public support and more funding are necessary for comprehensive violence prevention programs for youth. We look forward to further guidance, assistance and funding from the County of San Mateo.

Sincerely,

Timothy Beard,
Superintendent

September 19, 2005

Honorable Norman J. Gatzert
Judge of the Superior Court
Hall of Justice
400 County Center: 2nd Floor
Redwood City, CA 94063-1655

Dear Judge Gatzert:

The following comments are in response to the Grand Jury Findings and Recommendations related to Youth Gangs in San Mateo County Schools – Part 2: Schools:

2. Each school district should:

2.1 Ensure that all employees and parents are informed about gangs.

We agree with the finding. The recommendation has been implemented.

Copies of “The Who, How, and Why of Youth Gangs” was given to all employees at the start of the school year. The document will be included in PTA publications (sent to all parents) in October.

2.2 Train and encourage school district employees to use the recommended confidential hot line to report, to the extent permitted by law, any student who exhibits “at risk” behavior.

We agree with the finding. The recommendation has been partially implemented.

All staff were given information in September about “at risk” behaviors. We have been unable to locate the hotline number on any of the County or County Sheriff websites.

2.3 Encourage the middle and/or high schools in the district to establish school activities and programs that provide gang prevention programs.

We agree with the finding. The recommendation has been implemented.

The following activities have been in place for a number of years – each designed to provide alternative activities for students and support to parents:

- After school Study Center
- Intramural sports
- Lunchtime Enrichment Program (including Inspirational Speakers Series)
- After school enrichment classes and activities
- After school sports
- “Bilingual Buddies” for parent support
- After school musical production and music instruction opportunities
- “The Renaissance Program” which recognizes personal accomplishments, behavior, academic success, and regular attendance
- “Outreach” financial assistance assuring that all who wish may participate in all school programs and activities

continued on page 2

2.4 Collaborate to create a single calendar that will allow police departments to identify which youth are truant and to enforce truancy policies.

We agree with the finding. The recommendation has been partially implemented.

We have worked for years to coordinate our school calendar with the Sequoia Union High School District. Major vacation periods are coordinated. The coordination of other “days off” for students with both the other “feeder” districts to the SUHSD and the SUHSD, itself, has proved to be impossible. There are too many varying schedules for such things as parent conferences and staff development.

Sincerely,

Mary Ann Somerville
District Superintendent



***SUPERINTENDENT'S OFFICE
KENNETH RANELLA***

DISTRICT OFFICE

Kenneth Ranello,
Superintendent
Jo Sauer Mitchell,
Asst.Supt/Curriculum &
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Diane Head,
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181 Encinal Avenue
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September 16, 2005

Honorable Norman J. Gatzert
Judge of Superior Court
Hall of Justice
400 County Center, 2nd Floor
Redwood City, CA 94063-1655

From Grand Jury Summary:

“The Grand Jury recommends that each school district should ensure that all employees and parents are informed about gangs, train and encourage school district employees to use the confidential hot line to report any student who exhibits “at risk” behavior, encourage the middle and/or high schools in the district to establish school activities and programs that provide gang prevention programs, and collaborate to create a single unified calendar that will allow police departments to identify which youth are truant and to enforce truancy policies.”

The Menlo Park City School District agrees with the finding of the 2004-05 Grand Jury regarding Youth Gangs in San Mateo County. Efforts toward the prevention of young people from joining gangs are essential. That these efforts are community-wide is also essential. The incidence of gang-related crime is, thankfully, a non-issue within the Menlo Park City School District community. Because of this, the recommendations of the Grand Jury are not warranted to be implemented in the Menlo Park City School District.

However, many of the policies and practices that are already in place, particularly at Hillview Middle School (grades 6-8) address the recommendations of the Grand Jury. Examples are:

- Partner with parents in dealing with discipline for their children, seeking to deal with underlying causes of misbehaviors, which could be conflicts with other students or teachers.
- Conflict mediation with other students
- Counseling provided at/out of school
- Referral to outside service agencies
- Diversion programs through the Menlo Park Police Department
- Reinforcement of the concept that all behaviors are the result of personal choices, positive and negative
- All students receive education on bullying and harassment from counselors

- The eighth grade speaker series uses guest speakers from San Mateo County Crisis Prevention, Daytop, two private counseling therapists, and Kaiser Permanente.
- The educational officer at the Menlo Park Police Department spoke about the danger of wearing “colors.”
- Police officers also make yearly presentations to parent groups.

Respectfully,

Kenneth J. Ranella
Supperintendent

MILLBRAE SCHOOL DISTRICT
555 Richmond Drive
Millbrae, CA 94030

September 14, 2005

Hon. Norman J. Gatzert
Judge of the Superior Court
Hall of Justice
400 County Center, 2nd Floor
Redwood City, CA 94063-1655

Dear Judge Gatzert:

RE: YOUTH GANGS IN SAN MATEO COUNTY REPORT

The Millbrae School District is in receipt of the June 23, 2005 Grand Jury report and recommendations entitled "Youth Gangs in San Mateo County."

In response to the recommendations of the Grand Jury:

- 2.1 A representative from Taylor Middle School administration has attended "gang prevention" conferences, and information is disseminated to middle school faculty and staff. Taylor Parent Education includes a session on Student Safety, jointly presented by School Administration and the Millbrae Police Department School Resource Officer. This session includes information regarding identifying, monitoring and preventing gang activity.

"The Who, How and Why of Youth Gangs," provided by the Grand Jury, (Appendix A) will be available as a resource to our schools as needed.

The Taylor Middle School "Bulldog Code of Conduct" specifically addresses rules governing gang colors and clothing. These rules are reviewed with students at the beginning of each school year and are enforced consistently. The proactiveness of our Taylor administration in identifying "at risk" signs for gang activity has been an important prevention strategy. Additionally, students frequently report concerns to faculty, staff and administration which assist the administration in identifying, monitoring and preventing safety "at risk" behaviors on campus. High standards for student behavior, progressive discipline, an emphasis on school safety and a positive school climate for students all act as prevention strategies for gang activity.

The School District has a close working relationship with the Millbrae Police Department. This partnership has been key in maintaining safe schools in our

community. Keeping our schools safe presents new challenges each year as we continue to hold high standards for the educational environment on our campuses.

Hon. Norman J. Gatzert

September 6, 2005

Page 2

- 2.2 Taylor School faculty and staff have a close working relationship with the Taylor administration and counselor and frequently share concerns regarding students as needed. This network allows early identification of “at risk” behaviors in students so that appropriate support, prevention and/or intervention can be implemented.

Additionally, Millbrae Crimestoppers operates a private, secure 24-hour anonymous tip telephone line for individuals who have information about a crime. This phone number has been published in the District Newsletter and is disseminated to District faculty, staff and parents.

- 2.3 All Millbrae School District Schools place a high priority on providing school activities and programs that provide positive alternatives for students. All of our K-5 schools provide before and after school child care and homework centers. The City’s Park and Recreation program provides a multitude of after school, weekend, and summer programs for students. After school sports are provided by Park and Recreation as well as by other organizations and service clubs. The new Millbrae Library provides a variety of opportunities for students of all ages. Boy Scouts and Girl Scouts troop membership is available for all interested students.

Taylor Middle School provides a variety of after school programs, including the Homework Center, the Technology Center, the Robotics Team, the Chess Club, Music, Drama, Video Technology, Leadership Projects, School Newspaper and Yearbook, After School Sports, School Dances, Concerts and Plays.

- 2.4 The Millbrae School District attempts to coordinate the school calendar with the High School District for winter and spring breaks to facilitate family schedules. However, in order to schedule semester final exams before winter break, the 9-12 calendar begins early in August. This early start date has not worked well for K-8 students and families in our community. However, we do communicate our school calendar to our police department in order to facilitate monitoring of student activity in the community.

Sincerely,

Karen K. Philip
Superintendent

C: Board of Trustees
Administrators

Attachment



COUNTY OF SAN MATEO

400 COUNTY CENTER • REDWOOD CITY • CALIFORNIA 94063

TELEPHONE (650) 599-1664

ADDRESS ALL COMMUNICATIONS TO THE SHERIFF

August 3, 2005

Hon. Norman J. Gatzert
Judge of the Superior Court
Hall of Justice
400 County Center, 2nd Floor
Redwood City, CA. 94063

RE: Grand Jury Report: Youth Gangs in San Mateo County

Dear Judge Gatzert;

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on the Grand Jury's findings and recommendations in the above referenced report. I will summarize my responses to the findings and recommendations directed towards the Sheriff's Office.

Findings

I agree with the Grand Jury's findings as they pertain to the following:

- 1) *The current gang problem in San Mateo County.*
- 2) *The lack of a centralized clearinghouse for statistical information.*
- 3) *The overview of the proactive and reactive approaches currently being utilized by the various criminal justice agencies in San Mateo County.*

The Sheriff's Office has a long-standing commitment to programs that divert youth from gang membership, and has initiated and sponsored a range of successful programs to address gang membership and gang violence. These programs will be even more effective in combination with the recommendations contained in the Grand Jury report. The existing programs include GREAT (Gang Resistance Education and Training),

DARE (Drug Awareness Resistance Education), and the Sheriff's Activity League (SAL). These programs also include mentoring for parents to identify gang affiliation and provide resources to ensure that youths refrain from joining gangs. In addition, the Sheriff's Office, in association with the Pacific Skyline Council and the Boy Scouts of America, sponsors STAR (Sheriff's Training and Recreation) Camp. STAR Camp is in its 11th year and is held at Cutter Scout Reservation Camp in the Santa Cruz Mountains. Sheriff's Deputies, working with elementary schools in the Sheriff's service area and some cities select 120 boys and girls to participate. The program teaches respect for others, and instills values and self confidence in the youths to make the right choices in their everyday lives. This includes refraining from gangs, violence and drugs.

The Sheriff's Office has played a major role in coordinating and participating in ad hoc gang task forces throughout the County. The Sheriff's Office currently has a Crime Suppression Team that operates in East Palo Alto and the North Fair Oaks area to disrupt gang activity and investigate gang violence. This team is also available to any law enforcement agency in San Mateo County that has gang problems and coordinates "Operation Safe Summer" with the North County Gang Task Force. It should also be noted that two of the four officers in the Redwood City Street Crime Suppression Team mentioned in the Grand Jury's report are actually Sheriff's Deputies. The Sheriff's Office is also a member of the San Mateo County Gang Action Team that meets on a monthly basis to discuss recent gang activity and membership, and develop strategies to address gang violence that cross jurisdictional boundaries.

Recommendations

1. The Board of Supervisors and the Sheriff should:
 - 1.1 Provide a centralized clearing-house of gang related programs and information. A confidential hot line for reporting suspected gang activity or membership is an essential component of this program.

Response

I agree with this recommendation. Within the next six months, I would be willing to work with the Board of Supervisors and the San Mateo County Police Chiefs and Sheriff's Association to create a centralized clearing-house of gang related programs, information and confidential hot line. However, the day-to-day operation and management of these programs would require additional personnel and complete cooperation of all criminal justice agencies in San Mateo County.

- 1.2 Ensure that statistical information be collected on a countywide basis in order to measure the problem and the success or failure of the various efforts to curtail it.

Response

I agree with this recommendation. The collecting of statistical information goes hand-in-hand with recommendation 1.1. For the policymakers to make informed decisions on the success or failure of programs, the statistical information compiled must be complete and accurate. This will require full cooperation by all criminal justice agencies in San Mateo County and uniform data collection and reporting practices.

1.3 Promptly schedule a second meeting of the Youth Violence Prevention Workshop

Response

I agree with this recommendation. Through the leadership of Supervisor Adrienne Tissier and Supervisor Jerry Hill, the second meeting of the Youth Violence Prevention Workshop was convened on July 18, 2005. The Sheriff's Office will continue to work with the other City and County agencies to reduce youth violence in San Mateo County.

I appreciate the efforts the Grand Jury has undertaken to improve the quality of the criminal justice system in San Mateo County. Criminal street gangs pose a significant threat to the future of our youth and we all must take an active role to reduce gang membership and gang violence. Those of us in the criminal justice system stand ready to take a leadership role in this initiative, and I am hopeful that the recommendations of the Grand Jury will result in changes that will achieve this goal.

Respectfully submitted,

Don Horsley
Sheriff of San Mateo County

cc: The Honorable Board of Supervisors
Grand Jury Website
Court Executive Officer



Pacifica School District

375 Reina Del Mar Avenue ▲Pacifica, California 94044
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September 14, 2005

Honorable Norman J. Gatzert
Judge of the Superior Court
Hall of Justice, 2nd Floor
400 County Center
Redwood City, CA 94063-1655

Re: Youth Gangs in San Mateo County

Dear Judge Gatzert:

On behalf of the Pacifica School District, Board of Trustees, we submit the following in response to the 2004-05 Grand Jury report of June 23, 2005 which contains findings and recommendations pertaining to the Pacifica School District.

The Pacifica School District agrees with the findings. Recommendations will be implemented as follows:

Recommendation

- 2.1 District will implement during the 2005-06 school year by providing access for employees and parents to "The Who, How, and Why of Youth Gangs".
- 2.2 District will implement during the 2005-06 school year once the confidential "at risk" reporting hotline has been identified and trainer of trainers in service has been provided to the district.
- 2.3 District already implemented at the middle school through the student advisory program and throughout the district with the Character Initiative and after school programs at sites. The District utilizes the services of a School Resource Officer.
- 2.4 District will implement by providing a copy of the district calendar to the Pacifica Police Department and other local authorities.

If you have any questions regarding the response of the Pacifica School District, please do not hesitate to contact the Office of the Superintendent at 650.738.6625. Thank you.

Sincerely,

Original Signature Sent Via US Mail

Michele Garside, Ph.D.
Superintendent

MG:sc

Cc: Pacifica School District, Board of Trustees
Thomas F. Casey III, County Counsel



PVSD

PORTOLA VALLEY SCHOOL DISTRICT

4575 Alpine Road • Portola Valley, CA 94028

Phone: (650) 851-1777 • Fax: (650) 851-3700 • www.pvsd.net

Anne E. Campbell, Superintendent

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September 19, 2005

Hon. Norman J. Gatzert
Judge of the Superior Court
Hall of Justice
400 County Center, 2nd Floor
Redwood City, CA 94063-1655

Dear Judge Gatzert,

The Portola Valley School District has reviewed the 2004-05 Grand Jury Report and would like to respond to the findings regarding youth gangs in San Mateo County. We are a very small (676 student) K-8 school district and we work closely with our local law enforcement personnel to monitor potential gang activity. Currently, it is our belief that we do not have any gang activity occurring in our student population. However, we will certainly monitor the situation and will continue to support those programs, such as after-school sports and tutorial activities, that provide students with a supervised and supportive environment.

To respond specifically to the Grand Jury's Recommendations:

Recommendation 2.1

We will share "The Who, How, and Why of Youth Gangs" with our middle school staff and will also include it as part of our superintendent's column in our parent newsletter.

Recommendation 2.2

We are not convinced that encouraging our employees to report suspected student gang activity to a confidential hot line would be the most effective way to combat gang activity in Portola Valley. Rather, we would prefer to follow our established procedures where employees who have concerns about "at-risk" students communicate those concerns to our middle school counselor and administrative staff who then investigate the concerns, involve parents as needed, and deal with appropriate law enforcement authorities, as appropriate.

Recommendation 2.3

Our school district works very hard to provide a broad array of extra-curricular activities designed to give students constructive and character-building experiences outside of the regular school day. These activities include after-school sports, service learning, drama, art, gardening, homework centers, chess, leadership, and technology. We also keep our middle school library open until 4:30 p.m. every day and our town library is located on our middle school campus. We believe these programs provide a positive alternative to gang-related activities.

Recommendation 2.4

We negotiate our school calendar with representatives from our teachers' association every year. While we try to align our calendar with those of other districts, such alignment does not always meet the needs of our students and teachers. We will certainly continue to work with the Sequoia High School District and its feeder districts to discuss common calendar issues. In addition, we are always ready to work together with law enforcement to combat truancy as it occurs.

We have appreciated the opportunity to respond to the Grand Jury's recommendations. We certainly agree with the Grand Jury that gang activities in San Mateo County must be closely monitored and proactively prevented.

Very truly yours,

Anne E. Campbell

AEC:a



Ravenswood City School District

Administrative Office

2120 Euclid Ave., East Palo Alto, CA 94303
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www.ravenswood.k12.ca.us

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María Meza-De La Vega
Interim Superintendent

September 19, 2005

The Honorable Norman J. Gatzert
Judge of the Superior Court
Hall of Justice
400 County Center; 2nd Floor
Redwood City, CA 94063-1655

Dear Judge Gatzert:

The Ravenswood City School District is in agreement with the findings and recommendations of the report pertaining to youth gangs in San Mateo County. We take a very proactive stance in supporting our students and families in promoting academic empowerment and making positive life decisions. We feel that gang behaviors and related violence are an issue of critical importance in our community and district.

The District is currently in the process of meeting with the Juvenile Probation and East Palo Alto Police Departments. The essential topics of the meetings include the supervision and involvement of Resource Officers and Probation staff within our schools. The involvement of personnel from the criminal justice system is also critical in establishing positive relations between police and families in our community. The East Palo Alto Police Chief and I will be attending the "Safe Schools Forum" in Virginia.

We are currently developing mentoring programs that support literacy and positive community role models for our children. Our district is in partnership with a wide-range of community programs and resources that are preventive in nature (i.e., Boys & Girls Club, YMCA, Center for a New Generation, and various counseling programs). The district is actively networking with community committees to support their efforts to serve East Palo Alto and East Menlo Park.

We have a Center for Learning After School Support (CLASS) at every school site. The after school programs are open to all students and we encourage participants from our *at-risk* population. Various organizations utilize our school facilities for after school athletic programs, including track, soccer, football, and baseball.

We are currently developing a staff development program for all RCSD site personnel that will promote awareness of gang-type behaviors and dynamics, and reduce youth violence.

The RCSD has established a comprehensive parent education program that provides parent information and support in a number of critical areas. We will include in our parent education efforts a component that will inform parents about gang awareness and related parenting skills.

As a school district, our focus of data collection is related to student achievement. We have a comprehensive approach (at all school-sites) to deal with *at-risk* students and the targeting of negative behavior and academic disengagement. This approach includes Student Study Teams and related interventions to address behavioral and academic issues. We have a district-wide Positive Behavioral System that supports developing a positive and safe climate at every school site and addresses the needs of all students with behavioral issues.

We have put in place a district committee to review and update our schools' and district's safety and emergency plans. I maintain school safety as a critical priority in my communication to the entire district.

During these difficult fiscal times, the topic of creating a "stable and adequate funding source" to support our preventive programs is always an issue of high importance.

The Ravenswood City School District is excited with the Grand Jury's recommendation to create a *coordinated systematic approach* to deal with the gangs issue. We look forward to working with community and local agencies to develop effective programs to serve our youth.

Sincerely,

Maria De La Vega
Superintendent

cc: Ravenswood Board of Trustees
Thomas F. Casey III

REDWOOD CITY SCHOOL DISTRICT

750 Bradford Street, Redwood City, CA 94063 650-423-2230
facsimile 650-423-2204

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Superintendent
Donald G. Gielow

August 18, 2005

Honorable Noman J. Gatzert
Judge of the Superior Court
400 County Center, Second Floor
Redwood City, CA 94063

Dear Judge Gatzert:

Re: Grand Jury Report 2004-2005, Youth Gangs in San Mateo County

I have read the findings, conclusions and recommendations of Youth Gangs in San Mateo County from the Grand Jury dated June 23, 2005. I agreed with all the findings as they pertain to the Redwood City School District (RCSD). The report lists four recommendations for San Mateo County school districts. Below is the RCSD's response:

Recommendation 2.1 - We will ensure that employees and parents are informed about gangs, including a copy of "The Who, How and Why of Youth Gangs."

Recommendation 2.2 - This information about the hot line is shared with students at our middle schools at the beginning of the year.

Recommendation 2.3 - The Redwood City School District has instituted many programs to effect gang prevention. District staff work with students "at risk." The RCSD has held parent information nights to inform parents about gang related issues within the District. Given the seriousness of the problem, we are pursuing other options to address this critical issue.

Recommendation 2.4 - The RCSD is collaborating with the Sequoia Union High School District to create a single calendar. The RCSD is also trying to have all of the District schools start on the same date.

Sincerely,

Donald G. Gielow
Superintendent

ML:jo

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ADMINISTRATION
David E. Hutt, Ed.D.
Superintendent
Luther Aaberge
Chief Business Officer

August 11, 2005

Hon. Norman J. Gatzert
Judge of the Superior Court
Hall of Justice
400 County Center; 2nd Floor
Redwood City, CA 94063-1655

RE: JUNE 23, 2005, GRAND JURY YOUTH GANGS IN SAN MATEO
COUNTY REPORT

Dear Judge Gatzert:

The Governing Board of the San Bruno Park School District has reviewed the recommendations in *Youth Gangs in San Mateo County* as they relate to school districts. As requested, the following constitutes its response, which was officially approved at a Regular Meeting of the Governing Board held on August 10, 2005:

Recommendation 2.1: Each school district should ensure that all employees and parents are informed about gangs. A copy of "The Who, How, and Why of Youth Gangs" should be given to all employees and parents.

The San Bruno Park School District agrees with the finding. The recommendation has not yet been implemented, but will be implemented within the first four weeks of the 2005-06 school year.

Recommendation 2.2: Each school district should train and encourage school district employees to use the recommended confidential hot line to report, to the extent permitted by law, any student who exhibits "at risk" behavior.

The San Bruno Park School District agrees with the finding. The recommendation has not yet been implemented, but will be implemented within the first four weeks of the 2005-06 school year.

Recommendation 2.3: Each school district should encourage the middle and/or high schools in the district to establish school activities and programs that provide gang prevention programs.

Hon. Norman J. Gatzert
Page 2
August 10, 2005

The San Bruno Park School District agrees with the finding. San Bruno Park School District does not have a high school. Parkside Intermediate School (grades 7-8) has gang prevention activities and programs in place for staff and students, and maintains a proactive approach which includes educating students, parents, and teachers.

Recommendation 2.4: Each school district shall collaborate to create a single calendar that will allow police departments to identify which youth are truant and to enforce truancy policies.

The San Bruno Park School District agrees that a single calendar would assist our local police department. However, the curriculum/educational needs of our District and the San Mateo Union High School District do not allow for an identical schedule. An effort is made each year to align our calendar with the high school district to the extent that is practical. Also, we work closely with the San Bruno Police Department and provide them with our instructional calendar as soon as it is approved.

Members of the Governing Board and the administration of the San Bruno Park School District appreciate the efforts of the members of the Grand Jury in identifying existing programs in the county that appear to be effective in combating gangs and examining the critical features of effective programs that account for their success.

Cordially,

David E. Hutt, Ed.D.
Superintendent

DEH:ls

September 22, 2005

Hon. Norman J. Gatzert
Judge of the Superior Court
Hall of Justice
400 County Center; 2nd Floor
Redwood City, CA 94063-1655

Dear Sir:

Herein is the San Carlos School District Board response (Sept. 22, 2005) to the Grand Jury: Youth Gangs in San Mateo County. We have enumerated the recommendations and responded to each.

- 2.1 Ensure that all employees and parents are informed about gangs. A copy of “The Who, How, and Why of Youth Gangs” should be given to all employees and parents.

SCSD agrees with the finding for all employees and middle school parents. We have not yet implemented the finding, but will do so in the near future during the month of October, 2005.

- 2.2 Train and encourage school district employees to use the recommended confidential hot line to report, to the extent permitted by law, any student who exhibits “at risk” behavior.

SCSD agrees with the finding. It has not yet been implemented, but will be implemented in the future. We have a superintendent hotline and we will encourage employees to use the hot line for this purpose.

- 2.3 Encourage the middle and/or high school in the District to establish school activities and program that provide gang prevention programs.

SCSD agrees with the finding and has implemented it. We participate in DARE and have many before and after school activities for our students: sports, chess, reading groups, robotics, Odyssey of the Mind, ROPES, etc. that students may participate in.

- 2.4 Collaborate to create a single calendar that will allow police departments to identify which youth are truant and to enforce truancy policies.

SCSD disagrees partially with the finding. In the past south county districts have tried to have similar calendars for districts, but this is not always feasible. The high schools are changing to a “university” calendar with school starting early and ending in mid-May. The elementary districts try to follow the calendar to some degree, but it is not workable with our parent community to follow the high school district’s calendar rigidly. We meet with all south county districts and will continue to negotiate vacations, etc. and try to create somewhat similar calendars to assist the police with truants.

Respectfully,

Patricia Wool, Ed.D.
Superintendent
San Carlos School District

SAN MATEO COUNTY COMMUNITY COLLEGE DISTRICT

September 29, 2005

San Mateo Grand Jury
Superior Court of San Mateo County
Hall of Justice and Records
400 County Center
Redwood City CA 94063-1655

ATTN:

We are writing regarding the request for a response from our Governing Board to the Grand Jury Findings on Youth Gangs in San Mateo County. The San Mateo County Community College District is not a K-12 district, which appears to be the target audience for feedback on the report. Our District serves post-high school students ranging in age from 18 to older than 80; the average age of our students is about 30 years old. For this reason, we did not feel that our response was needed and therefore we did not reply by the September 21, 2005 deadline.

We hope that this explanation is satisfactory. Please call at any time if there are further questions.

Sincerely,

Barbara Christensen
Director of Community/Government Relations
San Mateo County Community College District

September 21, 2005

Honorable Norman J. Gatzert
Judge of the Superior Court
Hall of Justice
400 County Center, 2nd Floor
Redwood City, CA 94063-1655

Grand Jury Recommendations

The San Mateo-Foster City Elementary School District is in agreement with and in support of the Grand Jury's 2004-2005 Youth Gang San Mateo County recommendations.

Grand Jury Findings

1. Board of Supervisors and Sheriff should provide a clearinghouse of gang related programs/information, implement a hotline for reporting gang activity and gather statistical information.

- We agree with the supporting findings
- The recommendation will be supported by the District.
 - A hotline number will be shared with the District's families, including a summary of the rationale for the need.
 - We will keep records and complete countywide reports as requested.

**2. Each District should:
Ensure all employees and parents are informed about gangs.**

- We agree with the supporting findings.
- The recommendations will be implemented.
 - A copy of "The Who, How, and Why of Youth Gangs" (Appendix A) will be disseminated to all District employees and parents via Districtwide mailings.
 - Information related to gangs and an overview of Appendix A will be completed during school site faculty meetings.
 - Information related to gangs will be shared with District students at an age appropriate level.

Train and encourage School District employees to use the recommended confidential hotline to report, to the extent permitted by law, any student who exhibits "at risk" behavior.

- We agree with the supporting findings.
- The recommendation will be implemented.
 - District staff will be informed about the hotline and guidelines for use.

- The number will be provided and staff will be encouraged to use the hotline while at the same time adhering to Ed Code confidentiality guidelines.

Encourage the middle schools in the District to establish school activities and programs that provide gang prevention programs.

- We agree with the supporting findings.
- The recommendations have been implemented.
 - We are in the process of implementing a School and Attendance Review Board (SARB) to support student attendance.
 - Students' Rights and Responsibilities are mailed home to parents and students before the opening of school. Parents are requested to review the information with students. Included in this brochure are Ed Code guidelines related to student behavior, weapons, and consequences. These guidelines are included in student handbooks, and school newsletters, and with students at the site level.

In addition assemblies are held with middle school students in which specific guidelines and information are shared about gang activities, gang clothing, "wanna bee's," graffiti, gang paraphernalia, how to avoid becoming a gang member, where to get help, gang signs, and gang symbols.

- Conflict management skills, life skills, and mutual respect are a focus within our District at both the elementary and middle school levels.
- Counselors at the middle school level and the children's consulting center work with students in developing strategies related to violence and gang activity.
- Ongoing dialogue in classrooms and presentations keep students informed about keeping schools free from gang activity.
- Middle school administration and staff have been proactive in keeping gang activity off of the school campus. Academic learning can only occur in a safe environment. We agree gangs exist in San Mateo and gang members or "wanna bee's" attend our schools, but we make it very clear gang activity will not be tolerated.
- Probation officers are shared with the San Mateo Union High School District. They are visible on our middle school campuses and are proactive in elementary gang activity.
- After school academic programs are in place in many of our campuses as well as after school annex programs at both the middle school and elementary school levels.
- A component in our District's Strategic Plan, Student Social Responsibility, is focused on citizenship, making good choices, saying no to drugs and tobacco, and developing strategies for becoming a contributing member. Programs are in place to support this growth.
- Students participate in the Martin Luther King Center activities for middle school students and after school homework and tutoring

programs. The Boys and Girls Club after school tutorial program, and Parks and Recreation programs, and The Police Athletic Program (PAL).

- At the middle school level students are involved in the after school sports program throughout the year.
- Middle school Assistant Principals attend workshops focused on current gang activity.
- Our District participates in bi-monthly law enforcement committee meetings where the most current gang activities at the high school, middle school, and community levels are shared among participants in the San Mateo County parameters.
- Project FOCYS and YMCA are active in our schools and have participated in helping at risk students as a prevention for gang involvement.
- Other local agencies provide support as needed.
- Parent conferences are held at the middle school level with a focus on targeting students who have gang affiliations.

Collaborate to create a single calendar that will allow police departments to identify which youth are truant and to enforce truancy policies.

- We are not in support of this finding and recommendation
 - We have both year round and traditional schools in our District. Within our District we have a variety of calendars.

Submitted by:

Toni-Sue Passantino, Ed.D.
Assistant Superintendent for Educational Services

September 1, 2005

Honorable Norman J. Gatzert, Judge of the Superior Court
Hall of Justice
400 County Center; Second Floor
Redwood City, CA 94063-1655

Re: San Mateo Union High School District Response to Grand Jury Youth Gangs in San Mateo County Report

Grand Jury recommendation

2. Each school district should:
 - 2.1 Ensure that all employees and parents are informed about gangs. A copy of "The Who, How, and Why of Youth Gangs" (Appendix A) should be given to all employees and parents.

District Response

The San Mateo Union High School District agrees with this recommendation. Each school site will hold employee and parent violence awareness/prevention meetings in the first semester of the 05-06 school year. These meetings will be facilitated by district administration and county probation and will address the dynamics of gang attraction and affiliation along with the interventions that family, school and community can offer our youth. At these meetings, the document "The Who, How, and Why of Youth Gangs" will be added to the distributed informational packet.

Grand Jury recommendation

- 2.2 Train and encourage school district employees to use the recommended confidential hot line to report, to the extent permitted by law, any student who exhibits "at risk" behavior.

District Response

The San Mateo Union High School District agrees that a confidential hotline can appear to be a useful tool in securing assistance for at risk youth. Our experience with confidential hotlines, however, offers data that suggests extremely low incident use, despite wide publication of the hotline number on all seven high school sites and to all parent groups. Although we will publicize the new hotline resource, our main efforts will remain with the training of all personnel to communicate and work as a team with the support service professionals and administration on each campus.

Grand Jury recommendation

2.3 Encourage the middle and/or high schools in the district to establish school activities and programs that provide gang prevention programs.

District Response

The San Mateo Union High School District agrees that the most effective inoculation for gang ideation, affiliation and membership is after school programs. Presently, in addition to a wide variety of club activities, the San Mateo Union High School District supports both comprehensive athletic and fine arts programs at each comprehensive high school. It should be noted that the San Mateo Union High School District collaborates regularly with probation, police and counseling agencies to offer parents and students the knowledge and support systems needed to replace youth gang ideation and affiliation.

Grand Jury recommendation

2.4 Collaborate to create a single calendar that will allow police departments to identify which youth are truant and to enforce truancy policies.

District Response

The San Mateo Union High School District does not agree with the feasibility of all middle and high school districts within the county being able to successfully negotiate with all of the California Teachers Association unions a single calendar. We will however continue to share our school calendar with our local jurisdictions.

Sincerely,

Samuel Johnson, Jr., Superintendent and
Secretary to the Board

Sequoia Union High School District

480 JAMES AVENUE, REDWOOD CITY, CALIFORNIA 94062-1098

Administrative Offices (650) 369-1412

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PAT GEMMA
Superintendent

July 25, 2005

Refer to: PRG 952

Honorable Norman J. Gatzert
Judge of the Superior Court
Hall of Justice
400 County Center, 2nd Floor
Redwood City, CA 94063-1655

Re: Grand Jury Report, 2004-05, Youth Gangs in San Mateo County

I have read the findings conclusions and recommendations of the Youth Gangs in San Mateo County Report from the Grand Jury dated June 23, 2005. I agreed with all of the findings as they pertained to the Sequoia Union High School District. The report lists four recommendations for every school district within the County. I will make comment on each of these recommendations in the following paragraphs.

Recommendation 2.1 – We will ensure that employees and parents are informed about gangs. We will provide them with the necessary information and include Appendix A from the Grand Jury Report entitled, “The Who, How, and Why of Youth Gangs.” We will present this information to our parents and employees at the beginning of each school year.

Recommendation 2.2 – The Sequoia Union High School District is investigating the implementation of a hot line to report, amongst other things, students who exhibit “at risk” behavior. The cost and the legal ramifications do present challenges, however, we continue explore this option.

Recommendation 2.3 – All of our high schools have many and varied programs established to effect gang prevention. Some of these programs are the traditional extra curricular activities seen in most high schools, including athletics, performing arts, student clubs, etc. Additionally, our high schools are investigating the continuation of programs like KLEAR to help students understand the importance of respect and proper behavior.

Recommendation 2.4 – The Sequoia Union High School District collaborates with all of its eight partner elementary districts each year as we develop our academic calendar. Unfortunately, we have not been successful in getting the same academic calendar to exist for all nine school districts that make up the Sequoia area schools. Regardless of the past, we will continue to collaborate again with the goal to develop a single calendar.

Patrick R. Gemma, Ed.D.
District Superintendent

cc: Board of Trustees

Carlmont □ Menlo-Atherton □ Redwood □ Sequoia □ Woodside



SOUTH SAN FRANCISCO UNIFIED SCHOOL DISTRICT

398 B Street, South San Francisco, CA 94080-4423

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SUPERINTENDENT

Barbara Olds

BOARD OF TRUSTEES

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August 24, 2005

The Honorable Norman J. Gatzert
 Judge of the Superior Court
 Hall of Justice
 400 County Center, 2nd Floor
 Redwood City, CA 94063-1655

Dear Judge Gatzert

South San Francisco Unified School District has been proactive in dealing with youth gangs and gang-related behavior since the South San Francisco Police Department established the School/Police Liaison Program in 1980. In the early 1980s, when gangs were first appearing in town, the City of South San Francisco and the School District took a proactive approach to identify gang members and to address their negative behavior. What happens on the street impacts what happens on the school campus and vice versa.

The School District and the South San Francisco Police Department have developed an aggressive communication system that informs both parties of gang members, gang activity, and gang affiliation. In addition, the City of South San Francisco sponsors after school sports programs for at-risk youth on all three of our middle school campuses. The City also sponsors city-wide dances for the middle school students. The City has a "hot line" and has, for years, where anyone can anonymously leave information for the police. It is because of this collaboration and the aggressive approach of the South San Francisco Unified School District administrative staff takes in addressing gang members and gang activity that our campuses do not have gang activity. That is not to say that there are no gang members. However, the "gang bangers" keep their activity off campus.

Regarding the Grand Jury's recommendations:

Recommendation	Agree	Disagree	Implemented
1.1	X		Not implemented
1.2	X		"
1.3	X		"
2.1	X		The information will be placed in the next District newsletter and principals will be asked to send the information to parents in the individual school newsletters.

The Honorable Norman J. Gatzert

August 24, 2005

Page Two

2.2	X		Each year, the South San Francisco Police/School Liaison Officer speaks to our staff regarding gang activity.
2.3	X		Middle School Programs engage students in after-school activities. Cooperative effort with SSFUSD, SSFPD, and SSF Recreation and Community Services Department.
2.4		X	It is impossible for all 23 districts in San Mateo County to have a single calendar. However, our Police Department has our school year calendar and each week they receive a copy of each school's weekly calendar.

Thank you for providing a vehicle for us to share information. The South San Francisco Police Department and the South San Francisco Unified School District have embraced these activities for many years.

Sincerely

Barbara Olds
Superintendent

cc: Board of Trustees
Thomas F. Casey III
Rodina Catalano
Mark Raffaelli

October 1, 2005

Honorable Norman J. Gatzert
Judge of the Superior Court
Hall of Justice
400 County Center; 2nd Floor
Redwood City, CA 94063-1655

Re: Youth Gangs in San Mateo County

Dear Judge Gatzert,

The Woodside School District has reviewed the 2004-2005 Grand Jury Report: Youth Gangs in San Mateo County and essentially agrees with the findings. Our situation is somewhat different than most school districts in San Mateo County since we are a one school, K-8 school district with a total enrollment of only 450 students. Our rural environment buffers our students from much of the negative youth activity which may exist in parts of San Mateo County. It is the belief of our teaching staff that we currently do not have any gang activity occurring within our student population. Nor do we have issues with truancy, drug use, or violence within our student population.

In response to the Grand Jury's recommendations the District is, or will do the following:

- 2.1 Distribute "The Who, How, and Why of Youth Gangs" to our staff and discuss it at an all school staff meeting.
- 2.2 Woodside School District has a procedure for dealing with what we consider "at risk" behaviors, which involves school administration, the counselor, parents and law enforcement if necessary. We would prefer to follow this procedure until the County develops a workable alternative.
- 2.3 Our school works in collaboration with our PTA and Foundation to offer our students a wide variety of after school classes and sports activities. Our library is also staffed by a certificated employee four days a week until 4:30 as a homework center.
- 2.4 We will continue to work with Sequoia Union High School and our neighboring elementary districts to discuss the annual calendar. However, our calendar is negotiated with our teachers' association and approved by our School Board.

Sincerely,

Daniel A. Vinson, Ed.D.
Superintendent/Principal