

June 8, 2001

Mr. William L. Cathey
Foreperson
Santa Barbara County Superior Court
1100 Anacapa Street
Santa Barbara, CA 93121

RE: Response to Grand Jury Report Section 933(b)

Dear Mr. Cathey:

The following is a response to the Grand Jury Report, "Juvenile Probation." This response is only to the portion of the report that deals with the responsibilities of the Santa Barbara County Education Office, Findings 5 and 6 and Recommendations 3b, 4, and 5.

The County Education Office operates the educational program for the students in attendance. However, the responsibility for the facilities and after-school activities lies with the Santa Barbara County Department of Probation. The County Education Office and the Probation Department work very closely and cooperatively on these issues.

Finding 5:

Agree with finding. In the two juvenile halls and the three counseling and education centers, the female minors, as well as the male minors, receive a thorough core curriculum-based academic program during school hours. Given the increasingly rigorous high school requirements including more credits needed to graduate, standardized testing, high school exit exam, and Alternative Education Academic Performance Index, there remains little time to infuse counseling and non-academic subjects into the school day. However, through the use of guest speakers and video presentations leading to discussions and writing assignments, the school program is ready to put together a program with the support of the Probation Department and their oversight to prevent duplication of effort.

Finding 6:

Agree with finding. It is the intent of the Probation Department to explore more in-county group homes and foster care homes for female minors. Discussions are ongoing and the Santa Barbara County Education Office including the Special Education Division will be involved in the discussions. Currently, the County Education Office, through the county Community Schools program, enrolls and educates many of the county's group home and foster care minors.

Recommendation 3b:

The recommendation has been implemented. The Santa Barbara County Education Office and the Probation Department have been strong partners in three county community schools, three counseling and education centers, two juvenile halls, and one after care transition program to serve the female minor in-risk population. The collaboration is stronger than ever and has progressively added more agency participation. Collaborative meetings are being proposed for the second half of calendar year 2001 to further discuss the need for female-specific programs.

Recommendation 4:

The recommendation requires further analysis because other agencies are involved. The Santa Barbara County Education Office will be an active participant in upcoming discussions between key agencies to develop more programs and interventions for female minors. We intend to be fully cooperative in that process.

Recommendation 5:

The recommendation requires further analysis because other agencies are involved. We have placed bilingual, bicultural people to fill vacancies in our schools for this purpose. The Santa Barbara County Education Office will be an active participant in upcoming discussions between key agencies to develop more programs and interventions for female minors. We intend to be fully cooperative in that process.

Thank you for the report and all the time and effort it took to complete. The commendations and recommendations are appreciated.

Sincerely,

William J. Cirone

bc: Steve Powell
WJC:dr