

Memorandum



Date: July 5, 2005

To: Honorable Clifford R. Anderson III
Santa Barbara County Superior Court

Ted Sten, Foreperson
2005-2006 Santa Barbara County Grand Jury

R Scott DeuPree

From: R. Scott DeuPree, Chief Probation Officer

Subject: Response to 2004-2005 Santa Barbara County Grand Jury Final Report on "The Child Not Yet Left Behind," Santa Barbara County Community Schools

CC: Honorable Rodney S. Melville, Presiding Judge
Honorable J. William McLafferty, Assistant Presiding Judge
Honorable Arthur A. Garcia, Presiding Judge, Juvenile Court
Michael F. Brown, Santa Barbara County Executive Officer
Juvenile Justice/Delinquency Prevention Commission
Probation Department Administrative Staff

Please find enclosed the Probation Department's responses to the 2004-2005 Grand Jury's findings and recommendations on "The Child Not Yet Left Behind," Santa Barbara County Community Schools.

Enclosures: Response
Computer Disk (Foreperson Sten only)

**Probation Department
Finding and Recommendation**

FINDING 5: *Absenteeism and truancy remain a problem in Community Schools. The problem is worse in the North County schools, where they have no truancy counselor.*

Response: The respondent agrees with the finding only as it addresses those minors that come under the jurisdiction of the Probation Department. While we have no direct knowledge of the level of counseling students receive in Community Schools, we value their efforts to serve minors removed from schools, juvenile halls, camp, and group homes. We appreciate the high priority Probation minors are given by Community Schools.

Formal truancy intervention efforts by the Probation Department commenced in 1997 with the Truancy Prevention and Parent Accountability Program in the Santa Maria Valley via the Challenge I grant. The program was a complete success. Unfortunately, that grant ended. In 2001, the Truancy Mediation component became one of the Juvenile Justice Crime Prevention Act strategies and was implemented countywide.

The Probation Department has made a firm commitment to fighting truancy, as we know truancy is a major contributing factor to juvenile crime. The Department dedicates three Deputy Probation Officers to supervise truants utilizing Juvenile Justice Crime Prevention Act funding. These officers perform such duties as providing “wake up” visits to probation participants, as well as participating in Truancy Mediation meetings, making school checks, referring truants for specialized services, and providing overall case management and supervision. However, it is acknowledged that minors on nonspecialized caseloads, including some attending Community Schools, may not be receiving adequate levels of supervision due to caseload size.

RECOMMENDATION 5b: *The Probation Department, local Police Departments, and the County Education Office should work together to provide effective anti-truancy enforcement measures.*

Response: The recommendation has been implemented. The Santa Barbara County Juvenile Justice Coordinating Council meets bimonthly and includes representatives from the Probation Department, local Police Departments, and the County Education Office. The Truancy Mediation Program continues to enjoy the support of the Juvenile Justice Coordinating Council with Juvenile Justice Crime Prevention Act funding, and is articulated as one of three top priorities in the 2005 Comprehensive Multiagency Juvenile Justice Plan.

We support the Santa Barbara County District Attorney’s Truancy Mediation Program. This collaborative involves staff from the Probation Department, local Police Departments, local community-based organizations, local school district offices, and the County Education Office.