

The Santa Barbara School Districts'
Update to the June 2008 Grand Jury Report
Anti-Gang Efforts in the City of Santa Barbara: Who's in Charge?

Grand Jury Recommendation 3

Schools and law enforcement need to partner with community groups that provide counseling classes for parents.

Santa Barbara School Districts' Response

The Santa Barbara School Districts are partnering with the Family Service Agency, Santa Barbara Council on Alcoholism & Drug Abuse's Fighting Back program, and La Casa de la Raza to provide counseling classes for parents. The school districts have also expanded their own *Parent Project* program that focuses on: school success, attendance & truancy, parent involvement in schools, drug & alcohol education, juvenile justice system & gang prevention, parent support & skill development, post-secondary education, parent & student rights & responsibilities, and school & community resources.

Grand Jury Recommendation 6a

Schools and law enforcement should continue to work in concert and focus on safety zones beyond the school campuses. The Grand Jury letter dated January 20, 2010 asks the districts to comment on "The Santa Barbara School Districts are considering a pilot program to hire gang prevention/intervention specialists that would work exclusively on issues related to youth violence prevention and intervention on school campus as well as in the surrounding neighborhoods."

Santa Barbara School Districts' Response

The Santa Barbara School Districts have increased communications with law enforcement significantly since March 2004. This includes meetings with law enforcement, emergency telephone contacts, working with the South Coast Gang Task Force, and School Resources Officers. Unfortunately, recent budget restraints have forced the City of Santa Barbara to cut back the amount of School Resource Officer time available to city high schools and junior highs.

The school districts did hire a gang prevention/intervention specialist to work with junior high and high school students involved with gangs or at risk of gang involvement. The evaluation of this program written by Dr. Victor Rios, Department of Sociology at the University of California, Santa Barbara does show that the districts' gang prevention/intervention specialist program was effective in meeting the districts' primary goals of connecting the students with school and reducing the level of gang related conflict and violence. A copy of the evaluation is attached. Fiscal restraints have not permitted the districts to expand the program as originally envisioned. The South Coast Gang Task Force has been approached about sharing the costs of the program.

Grand Jury Recommendation 6b

Santa Barbara School Districts should continue to partner with community organizations to develop after-school programs.

Santa Barbara School Districts' Response

The Santa Barbara School Districts continue to partner with the following community, governmental and educational organizations to develop after-school programs through a

collaborative community-wide effort: All For One; American Youth Soccer organization; Boys and Girls Club; Boys Scouts of America; City of Santa Barbara-Parks and Recreation; Community Action Commission; Community Collaborative Foundation, Endowment for Youth Committee; Future Leaders; Girls, Inc; Goleta Valley Community Center; Isla Vista Youth Projects; La Casa de la Raza; Page Youth Center; Planned Parenthood; Police Assistance League; Santa Barbara City College; Santa Barbara Council on Drug and Alcohol Abuse; Santa Barbara Community Youth Performing Arts Center; Santa Barbara County Office of Education; Santa Barbara Youth Football League; United Way; University of California, Santa Barbara; YMCA; Young Life; and YStrive.

Grand Jury Recommendation 7

School security personnel should have direct communication with law enforcement and should be trained to monitor youth violence appropriately.

Santa Barbara School Districts' Response

Additional trainings have been provided for our school safety assistants related to the monitoring and prevention of youth violence. School security personnel are still required to contact the school's administrative staff prior to making contact with law enforcement. Little time is lost from the moment a request for law enforcement assistance is received and the call to law enforcement is placed. There is no evidence that the work of school security personnel have been impeded or jeopardized by the lack of District issued cell phones to school security personnel.

Grand Jury Recommendation 8

The Santa Barbara School Districts, in partnership with law enforcement, should establish and promote a telephone tip line.

Santa Barbara School Districts' Response

Tip-lines were installed at each high school and junior high school campuses at the start of the 2008-2009 school year. The tip-lines did not receive any reports of youth and/or gang violence and were discontinued for the 2009-2010 school year.

Grand Jury Recommendation 9

The Santa Barbara School Districts should strive to maintain this effective anti-drug/anti-gang program.

Santa Barbara School Districts' Response

The Santa Barbara School Districts were able to fund Santa Barbara Council on Drug and Alcohol Abuse's Youth Services Specialists program for the 2009-2010 school year, but the funding of this program for the next school year is uncertain at this time.

Grand Jury Recommendation 10

Santa Barbara School Districts should work with community groups to enlist more participation from college students for tutoring and mentoring at-risk youth.

Santa Barbara School Districts' Response:

The gang prevention/intervention specialist hired by the Santa Barbara School Districts has been successful in enlisting more participation from college students (Graduate and Undergraduate students) to tutor and mentor at-risk youth. More work still needs to be done in this area.