

July 25, 2011

Hon. Arthur A. Garcia
Assistant Presiding Judge
Santa Barbara Superior Court
312 East Cook Street
Santa Maria, CA 93454

Hon. Arthur Garcia:

RE: Where is the Truancy Program in Santa Barbara County?
Response to Findings and Recommendations

Finding 1: Agree with the finding. The SMJUHSD operates its own attendance/truancy program using its own local resources combined with those of a local federal grant.

Recommendation 1a: This recommendation requires further analysis.

Provided the county has the financial resources to reinstate the initial letter portion of the truancy program, the SMJUHSD would benefit from the initial letter as a preliminary intervention for students with attendance problems.

Recommendation 1b: This recommendation requires further analysis.

Provided the county has the financial resources to provide the quarterly reports of the results of the initial letter, the SMJUHSD would benefit from this data in order to better monitor the effectiveness of the initial letter and help manage our attendance/truancy program.

Recommendation 1c: This recommendation requires further analysis.

The School Attendance Review Boards assists with difficult truancy cases that individual schools and districts are frequently faced with. However, instability in state and local budgets makes it difficult for our district to provide attendance/truancy funding to both local and county efforts.

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Recommendation 1d: This recommendation requires further analysis.

The SMJUHSD currently enforces truancy laws to every degree possible using available resources. Assistance with truancy enforcement from both the District Attorney's office and the Santa Barbara County Office of Education would supplement our local efforts. The implementation of this recommendation will depend on the District Attorney and Santa Barbara County office's decision to make resources available to our school district.

Recommendation 2b: This recommendation will not be implemented because it is not financially possible at this time.

As is the case for most California Public School Districts, the SMJUHSD has reduced various programs and positions associated with those programs due to decreased revenues from the State. Although the SMJUHSD considers truancy a problem and priority, the district awaits news related to the current year's budget and cannot make additional financial commitments at this time.

Sincerely,

Douglas Kimberly, Ed.D.,
Superintendent

cc: Hon. Joni Gray