



SANTA YNEZ VALLEY UNION HIGH SCHOOL DISTRICT  
2975 E. Highway 246 • Post Office Box 398 • Santa Ynez, CA 93460  
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PAUL TURNBULL, PH.D.  
District Superintendent

November 27, 2012

The Honorable Judge Brian Hill  
Presiding Judge of the Superior Court of Santa Barbara County  
1100 Anacapa Street  
Santa Barbara, CA 93101

Re: Signed Response to the 2011-2012 Santa Barbara County Grand Jury Report  
Entitled "Reducing Truancy Throughout The County-A Prudent Investment"

Dear Judge Hill:

The attached response represents the views of the Santa Ynez Valley Union High School District in relation to the Grand Jury's report on Truancy in Santa Barbara County. In short, the District believes that the truancy program is an important aspect of K-12 education. As such, it has taken an active role in the development of a comprehensive truancy program in the Santa Ynez Valley.

We appreciate the Grand Jury's attention to such an important matter.

Best regards,

Paul Turnbull, Ph.D.  
Superintendent

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Union High School District herein responds in writing to the findings and recommendations found in the Santa Barbara County Civil Grand Jury's 2011-12 report entitled "Reducing Truancy Throughout the County: A Prudent Investment."

**Finding 2**

Between 2000 and 2008, Santa Barbara County had an effective truancy program under the direction of the Santa Barbara County Office of the District attorney. During that time the truancy rate averaged 20 percent.

**Response**

*Absent our own independent verification, Santa Ynez Valley Union High School District (SYVUHSD) accepts this finding as accurate.*

**Finding 3**

After the termination of the program, truancy rates increased to a high of 30.76 percent in Santa Barbara County in 2010-11 and exceeded the truancy rate for the State of California for three years in a row.

**Response**

*Absent our own independent verification, SYVUHSD accepts this finding as accurate.*

**Finding 5**

Reducing truancy rates at the secondary school level would result in significantly increased revenues to the school districts.

**Response**

*As a Basic Aid-funded school district not dependent on Average Daily Attendance for funding, SYVUHSD would not see increased revenue from reduced truancy rates; however, SYVUHSD agrees that County school districts funded under the Revenue Limit model would see increased revenues.*

**Recommendation 1**

That each secondary school district be responsible for operating its own truancy reduction program that conforms to the legal requirements of the State of California's Education Code by the beginning of the 2012-13 school year.

**Response**

*SYVUHSD agrees that initial truancy reduction intervention is the responsibility of local school districts*



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and that said programs must conform to the legal requirements of the State of California's Education Code. SYVUHSD currently employs such a program and will continue to operate this program into the 2012-13 school year. Effective subsequent efforts for habitual truants require the assistance of the Santa Barbara County Office of the District Attorney.

**Recommendation 4**

That all secondary school districts document their efforts to address truancy in a manner that can be used by the Office of the District Attorney, if and when legal proceedings are initiated.

**Response**

SYVUHSD agrees that truancy reduction efforts should be documented in a manner that can be used by the Office of the District Attorney. SYVUHSD currently subscribes to this practice.

**Recommendation 5**

That all secondary districts estimate the amount of money lost in the 2011-12 school year due to truancy and report this information to their school boards, the Santa Barbara County Education Office and the Santa Barbara County Board of Supervisors.

**Response**

SYVUHSD agrees that an estimate of money lost due to truancy would be useful for Revenue Limit districts to report to the various governing bodies; however as a Basic Aid district, SYVUHSD would not be able to gather or report this information.

**Recommendation 6**

That all secondary school districts track any reduction in truancy after the implementation of the truancy reduction program and calculate the increase in revenue resulting from such reduction and report this information to their school boards, the Santa Barbara County Education Office and the Santa Barbara County Board of Supervisors.

**Response**

SYVUHSD agrees that tracking any reduction in truancy is a key component of the effectiveness of the truancy intervention program; however as a Basic Aid school district, SYVUHSD would not be able to calculate and report increased revenue to the various governing bodies.

Sincerely,



Paul Turnbull  
Superintendent