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GREGORY KAMPF, SUPERINTENDENT

JUL 31 2012

BY _____

June 28, 2012

Santa Barbara County Grand Jury
Superior Court of Santa Barbara County
1100 Anacapa Street
Santa Barbara, CA 93101

Attached please find Lompoc Unified School District's response to your report entitled: "Reducing Truancy Throughout the County – A Prudent Investment. Pursuant to the *California Penal Code Section 933*.

Please contact my office if you require further information.

Sincerely,

Gregory Kampf
Superintendent of Schools
Lompoc Unified School District

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Attachment

c Judge Brian Hill

Lompoc Unified School District

Response to Grand Jury Report

BY: _____

"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.

Lompoc Unified School District agrees with this finding. LUSD has had a higher rate of truancy than the county or state since 2005. Below, please find the historical truancy rate from 2004 to 2011. The truancy rate for the Lompoc Unified School District for 2010-11 was 31.43% which is a decrease of 8.04% from the 2009-10 rate.

Truancy Rate	2004-05	2005-06	2006-07	2007-08	2008-09	2009-10	2010-11
LUSD	19.7	27.46	32.06	27.97	27.16	39.47	31.43
Santa Barbara County	20.58	19.46	19.85	20.92	27.02	30.7	30.76
State of California	22.56	24.61	25.22	25.7	24.15	28.32	29.76

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.

Lompoc Unified School District agrees with this finding. After the termination of the county truancy program, the truancy rate for the Lompoc Unified School District rose to a high of 39.47% in the 2009-10 school year. The truancy rate for the Lompoc Unified School District was 8.77% above the county average in the 2009-10 school year. During the 2009-10 school year, the district referred three cases for prosecution. The DA's office accepted these cases, however, the school district was informed that a contract was necessary if any more cases were going to be referred. LUSD did not have a contract for services with the Santa Barbara County District Attorney's office until the 2010-11 school year. After the agreement was reached, the school district began referring cases to the District Attorney's office for prosecution. The net result was the truancy rate was reduced by 8.04% in 2011 because cases were once again referred to the DA's office for prosecution.

Disposition	2009-10	2010-11	2011-12
Number of Cases Referred to DA	3	4	13
Cases Rejected	1	2	2
Cases Accepted	2	2	9

Recommendation 1

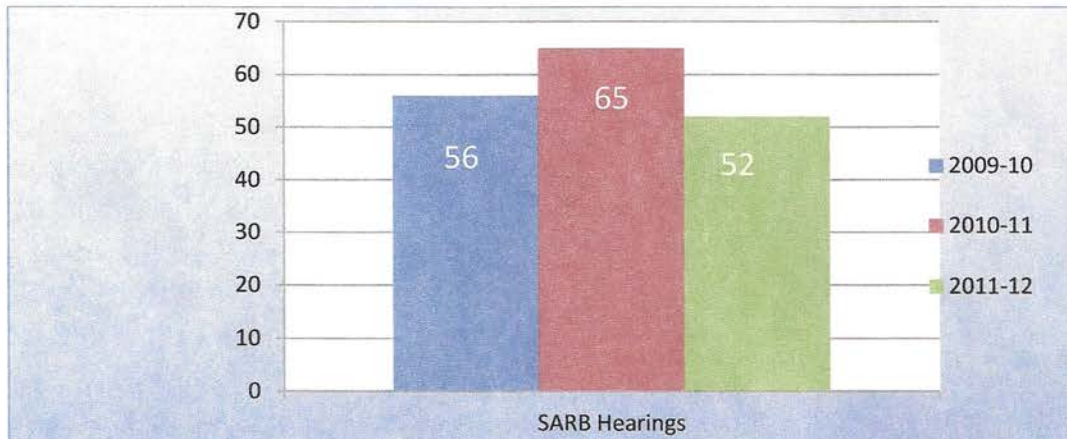
That each secondary school district be responsible for establishing and operating its own truancy reduction program that conforms to the legal requirements of the State of California's Education Code by the beginning of the 2012-13 school year.

The Lompoc Unified School District is in full agreement with this recommendation. The Lompoc Unified School District has continuously operated its own truancy reduction program since 2008 and this program conforms to the legal requirements of the State of California's Education Code.

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.

The Lompoc Unified School District maintains documentation regarding the letters sent to parents, dates and times of truancy meetings, copies of subpoenas and minutes of School Attendance Review Board (SARB) meetings held. This documentation is compliant with California Education Code and has been used in legal proceedings conducted by the District Attorney's office in the Santa Barbara County Juvenile Court during the 2011-2012 school year.



	2009-10	2010-11	2011-12
SARB Hearings	56	65	52

During the 2010-11 school year, a renewed focus to reduce the truancy rate in the Lompoc Unified School District began. The district explored options and determined that there was a need for improved communication with parents regarding their child's attendance. As a result of this quest, the district contracted with School Innovations and Advocacy to implement the Attention to Attendance program (A2A) at all district schools. This program has sent out over 3,241 letters to parents of students that have accrued more than three unexcused absences and 1,063 truancy conference notifications.

Finding 5

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

The Lompoc Unified School District agrees that revenues would increase. During the 2011-12 school year, Lompoc Unified School District took a proactive stance to reduce its truancy rate of 31.43%. It entered into an agreement with School Innovations and Advocacy to implement the Attention to Attendance (A2A) program. As a result of this contract, A2A has sent out 3,241 letters to parents regarding truancy, monitored the truancy conferences, and reviewed the District's procedures to ensure they met legal compliance. Because of this effort, it is anticipated that the truancy rate for LUSD should decrease for the 2011-12 school year. During this time, LUSD also entered into a contract with the Santa Barbara County Board of Supervisors to pay for cases referred to the District Attorney's Office for citation. During the 2011-12 school year, LUSD referred 13 cases to the District Attorney's Office, the table below provides data for the last three years.



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Recommendation 5

That all secondary school 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.

Lompoc Unified School District agrees with the reporting of lost revenue due to truancy. LUSD would caution the Board of Supervisors not to impose the cost associated with the proposed Assistant District Attorney and clerical help to school districts at a rate equal to the increased revenues, but rather develop an equitable formula that charges districts based on the number of students and the number of cases prosecuted by the DA's office. The sum total loss in revenue at our secondary schools due to truancy is \$471,361.80.

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.

Lompoc Unified School District is in agreement with the reporting of truancy information to the LUSD Board of Education, Santa Barbara County Education Office (SBCEO) and Santa Barbara County Board of Supervisors. Truancy data could be reported either annually or semi-annually to the SBCEO and annually to the Board of Supervisors.