



# SAN DIEGO COUNTY OFFICE OF EDUCATION

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Superintendent of Schools  
Randolph E. Ward, Ed.D.

RECEIVED

JUL 23 2007

July 18, 2007

Honorable Janis Sammartino  
Presiding Judge of the Superior Court  
Presiding Department  
220 West Broadway  
San Diego CA 92101

RECEIVED  
JUL 24 2007  
SAN DIEGO  
COUNTY GRAND JURY

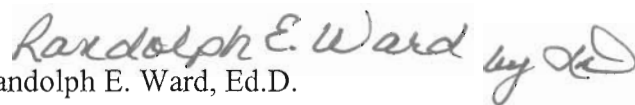
Re: Response to the 2006-2007 Grand Jury Report – “Violence In Schools”, filed  
April 25, 2007

Dear Judge Sammartino:

Enclosed is our response to the Grand Jury Report of April 25, 2007, concerning the recent violence in San Diego County schools. A copy of the response is being provided to you in accordance with the Grand Jury’s “Requirements and Instructions.” In addition, our response to the report has been sent to David Higgins, Grand Jury Foreman.

If I can be of further assistance, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Sincerely,

  
Randolph E. Ward, Ed.D.  
County Superintendent of Schools

REW:CI:CA

Enclosure

## Board of Education

Nick Aguilar Susan Hartley Sharon C. Jones Robert J. Watkins John Witt

**SERVICE AND LEADERSHIP**

**SAN DIEGO COUNTY OFFICE OF EDUCATION  
RESPONSES TO THE GRAND JURY RECOMMENDATIONS  
REGARDING VIOLENCE IN SCHOOLS**

**Recommendation 07-01:** Petition the National Safe School Institute for a review and critique of current requirements mandated by the National Safe Schools Institute

**SDCOE Response:** This recommendation will not be implemented.

The National Safe Schools Institute does not provide reviews or critiques nor has it ever mandated any program implementation. The National Safe Schools Institute was a conference hosted by the Student Services and Programs Division Safe Schools Unit of the San Diego County Office of Education (SDCOE). The annual conference was last held in October 2003. The conference is no longer held annually. Instead, the Safe Schools Unit provides on going workshops and trainings to school district staff, parents and agencies in all areas of at-risk prevention including school safety and healthy youth development. The Safe Schools Unit of the SDCOE does offer and provides safety assessments/reviews for schools. The Safe Schools Unit also provides training in the development of school safety plans. This fiscal year ten trainings on school safety plans were provided to 345 school district representatives

This school year trainings in school safety which have been provided by SDCOE include: seven trainings on alcohol tobacco and other drug prevention with 231 participants from 30 districts and 47 participants from service agencies; 32 trainings on After School Education and Safety with 935 participants from 33 school districts and 143 participants from agencies; 104 trainings on general school climate with 2909 participants from 40 districts and 562 participants from agencies; 46 violence prevention and intervention trainings with 1706 participants from 37 districts and 189 participants from agencies. In addition, 9 gang prevention trainings specifically for students were provided to 792 youth from five school districts this fiscal year.

**Recommendation 07-02:** Request funding to reinstitute the Gang Risk Intervention Program (GRIP) program.

**SDCOE Response:** This recommendation has been implemented.

The GRIP program was funded by a grant provided by the California Department of Education. In 2003, the funding source ended and school districts were afforded the opportunity to apply for “block grants” for school safety. These were made available through the California Department of Education and the Attorney General’s Office. These new “block grants” allowed school districts flexibility with respect to the purchase of programs or services for school safety. The County Office of Education then applied for these “block grant” funds. With the receipt of these funds, we continue to provide the same GRIP model of services to selected school districts. The SDCOE currently provides the GRIP model services in four districts and fifteen schools, serving approximately 300 students using the GRIP model of intervention services. Therefore, the Grand Jury Report statement that “the lack of funding caused the Unit to disband” is inaccurate. The Safe Schools Unit is still fully functioning with a variety of student at-risk prevention programs. We continue to seek additional funding to provide the GRIP model of services to students who are at risk of becoming involved in gangs.

**Recommendation 07-03:** Solicit the state funds and recruit additional counselors to meet the American School Counselor recommended ratios of 1 to 250 counselors to students

**SDCOE Response:** The recommendation has been implemented.

The San Diego County Office of Education informs legislators and advocates about issues relevant to education, including counseling and guidance. During the 1999-2000 school year, SDCOE led efforts to develop *Standards for Comprehensive Counseling and Guidance Programs in San Diego County Schools* which supports the American School Counselor recommended ratio of 1 to 250. In 2005, California boosted funding by 200 million dollars to provide additional school counseling services (AB1802). The California Department of Education supports the recommended standards and utilized them in the development of their *Guidelines for School Counseling in the State of California*. These guidelines were released in April, 2007 and indicate that by 2011, the ratio will have changed to 300 to 1. SDCOE expects that the California Department of Education will continue to move to fully implement the recommendations of the *Standards for Comprehensive Counseling and Guidance Programs*. SDCOE’s legislative advocate will continue to inform the legislature of the need for meeting the 250 to 1 ratio during fiscal year 07-08.

**Recommendation 07-04:** Become proactive by soliciting funds for reinstatement of the D.A.R.E. and SSP.

**SDCOE Response:** This recommendation will not be implemented.

The California Department of Education removed the D.A.R.E. Program from its list of Promising Practices due to its ineffectiveness. The D.A.R.E. Program is in the process of being revised and updated in order to provide for more effective impact on student behavior. The Safe Schools Unit, in partnership with law enforcement, provides training in the Gang Resistance Education and Training (G.R.E.A.T.) Program.

SDCOE has no influence on San Diego Police Department funding for school safety patrols (SSP).

**SAN DIEGO COUNTY OFFICE OF EDUCATION RESPONSES TO  
GRAND JURY FACTS/FINDINGS REGARDING  
VIOLENCE IN SCHOOLS**

**Finding:** The San Diego County Office of Education (SDCOE) was provided information which was relevant to violence in schools based on history prior to 2003. Violence in schools continues and may be influenced by current trends with gangs, copycats crimes and changes in the mores of our society.

**SDCOE Response:** SDCOE agrees with this finding.

The California Safe Schools Assessment was a report of crimes in schools in San Diego County that was provided to SDCOE by the California Department of Education. The Department eliminated the requirement of schools districts to report these crimes in 2004.

**Finding:** The Office of Education staff still attempts to deal with gang problems and enlists the help of college mentors to deal with gang “wannabes.” Current statistics indicate that gang related problems have escalated in recent years, especially in drive-by shootings.

**SDCOE Response:** SDCOE agrees partially with the findings.

SDCOE Safe School Unit hires college students as mentors and provides specific training to them in order to prepare them to participate as mentors to students who are at risk of becoming involved in gangs.

**Finding:** According to the American School Counselor Association, the state’s average student to counselor ratio in elementary school through high school was 966-to-1 in 2004. The national average was 488-to-1. However, help has arrived. Public middle and high schools throughout California are getting \$200 million this year from the state of California to hire an additional 3,000 counselors – boosting by more than 40% the number of guidance professionals assisting students social, emotional and academic needs.

**SDCOE Response:** SDCOE agrees with the finding.

**Finding:**

Drug Abuse Resistance Education, D.A.R.E., is a publicly funded program that uses law enforcement resources to help children resist drugs and gangs and to target at-risk groups and solicit information for police consideration. Preventing adolescent drug abuse is a national concern. A number of programs have been developed to tackle the problem; yet teen drug use has gone up.

**SDCOE Response:**

SDCOE agrees with this finding.