

## **Investigation Update Community and Court Schools**

The 1995/96 Grand Jury reviewed the Ventura County Superintendent of Schools' (VCSSO) responses to the recommendations made by the 1994/95 Grand Jury regarding the overall management of McBride (Court Unit School) and Gateway Community School. These recommendations dealt with the allegations regarding curriculum, staff programs, funding, student treatment and director management style.

### **ACTIONS TAKEN BY COUNTY SUPERINTENDENT AND STAFF TO INVESTIGATE ALLEGATIONS:**

The County Superintendent immediately ordered an independent Special Fiscal Audit and assigned the Assistant Superintendent, Educational Services and the Director of Human Resources to conduct an in-depth investigation of the public allegations relating to Court and Community Schools. These staff members analyzed each written claim and identified data that was necessary to draw conclusions. They collected massive data and reports and provided an opportunity for each staff member associated with the two schools in question to be interviewed. Interviews were in groups with individual interview opportunities provided. Interview input was documented.

The County Superintendent wrote that "It is my top priority for staff to utilize the findings of the special fiscal audit report, Investigative Report, and the 1994/95 Grand Jury Report to improve the instructional program for students at these two schools."

### **RESULTS OF ACTIONS BY VCSSO**

- After all allegations were analyzed, a detailed plan of action to investigate and address each claim was developed.
- Members of the VCSSO staff and the County Superintendent met with the 1995-96 Grand Jury throughout the year to discuss the work in progress.
- Changes in management personnel were made.
- Court and Community Schools staffs volunteered time to assist in accomplishing the required actions.
- Detailed Action Plan Updates were sent to the Grand Jury on a regular basis. These Action Plan sheets were modified with new information each time to show progress.
- Program administrators kept records of progress to date.
- Major areas of improvement were selected for each Action Plan Update focus.
- Grand Jury visits to the schools in question were encouraged by the Superintendents' office and staff.

## COMMENDATIONS

The 1995/96 Grand Jury commends the Ventura County Superintendent of Schools and his staff for the manner in which they investigated the validity of the concerns and addressed all recommendations of the previous Grand Jury.

We particularly commend the Assistant Superintendent Educational Services for the hard work and dedication that was necessary in order to address every recommendation and bring about improvements that will benefit the students of Ventura County Schools.

We also commend the staff members at the Court and Gateway Community Schools who so willingly gave of their time to accomplish the changes that will ultimately assure a better education to the troubled youth of Ventura County.