



Administration

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VENTURA COUNTY OFFICE OF EDUCATION

Stanley C. Mantooth, County Superintendent of Schools

May 23, 2013

The Honorable Brian J. Back
Presiding Judge of the Superior Court
County of Ventura
800 South Victoria Avenue
Ventura, California 93009

RE: Grand Jury Report Dated April 17, 2013, "Wasting Education Money - Paying Twice"

Enclosed please find the Ventura County Office of Education's response to the Grand Jury report dated April 17, 2013. We trust that the document fully responds to both the Grand Jury's findings and recommendations.

If you have any questions regarding the information presented in this response, please contact Dr. Valerie Chrisman, Assistant Superintendent, at 805-383-1903 or vchrisman@vcoe.org.

Sincerely,

Stanley C. Mantooth
Ventura County Superintendent of Schools

CC: Jay Whitney, Foreperson
Ventura County Grand Jury, 2012-13

Dr. Jamillah Moore, Chancellor ✓
Ventura County Community College District

Ventura County Board of Education Trustees

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GRAND JURY

Response to Grand Jury Report Form

Report Title: Wasting Education Money: Paying Twice

Report Date: April 17, 2013

Response by: Stanley C. Mantooth Title: Ventura County Superintendent of Schools

FINDINGS

- I (we) agree with the findings numbered: FI-10 (see statement attached)
- I (we) disagree wholly or partially with the findings numbered: FI-01, FI-02, FI-03, FI-04, FI-05, FI-06, FI-07, FI-08, FI-09, FI-11, FI-12, FI-13
(Attach a statement specifying any portions of the findings that are disputed; include an explanation of the reasons therefor.)

RECOMMENDATIONS

- Recommendations numbered _____ have been implemented.
(Attach a summary describing the implemented actions.)
- Recommendations numbered RI-01, RI-02, RI-03 have not yet been implemented, but will be implemented in the future.
(Attach a timeframe for the implementation.)
- Recommendations numbered _____ require further analysis.
(Attach an explanation and the scope and parameters of an analysis or study, and a timeframe for the matter to be prepared for discussion by the officer or director of the agency or department being investigated or reviewed, including the governing body of the public agency when applicable. This timeframe shall not exceed six months from the date of publication of the grand jury report.)
- Recommendations numbered _____ will not be implemented because they are not warranted or are not reasonable.
(Attach an explanation.)

Date: May 22, 2013

Signed: _____



Number of pages attached: 7



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VENTURA COUNTY OFFICE OF EDUCATION

Stanley C. Mantooth, County Superintendent of Schools

Response to Grand Jury Report Statements to Findings and Recommendations Wasting Education Money: Paying Twice April 17, 2013

Ventura County Office of Education

FINDINGS WITH WHICH WE AGREE:

FI-10 Close to \$2.3 billion is lost to our economy because students who are required to take remedial reading are more likely to drop out of college without having earned a degree, thereby earning less and impacting the local tax base. In California over the last three years, \$809 million was removed from the funding of community colleges, causing reduced class offerings and services.

We agree that a loss of potential income for students who do not earn a college degree is a problem first for the student and their individual earning potential and second for the community in terms of lost tax base.

FINDINGS WITH WHICH WE DISAGREE:

FI-01 The failure of Ventura County K-12 schools to adequately prepare students for college-level classes results in the Ventura County taxpayers paying for the same education two or more times for remedial students, once in K-12 and again in college.

We disagree with the statement because it is based on an inaccurate assumption. Not all community college students who need remedial classes have matriculated directly from Ventura County K-12 schools. National data that identifies students by selected characteristics shows that students who are most likely to take remedial courses are 24 years or older (Aud, S., Hussar, W., Kena, G., Bianco, K., Frohlich, L., Kemp, J., Tahan, K. (2011). *The Condition of Education 2011* (NCES 2011-033), U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics. Washington, DC: U.S. Government Printing Office). Some community college students graduate from high schools in other counties and other community college students are adults, returning to school many years after high school. No local data was provided that demonstrated there is a clear correlation between recent Ventura County high school graduates and those students who drop out of community college in the first or second year of higher education.

FI-02 Students taking remedial, non-transferable courses, drop out of college at a greater rate than students taking transferable courses and thus use resources that college-prepared students could be using.

We disagree with this statement because of its broad implication. The community college enrolls students and provides access to courses that reflect the needs of the students it enrolls. To enroll students in one course does not necessarily mean that other courses are unavailable.

While we do agree that students taking remedial, non-transferable courses are less likely to persist and continue their educations, we suggest that the database be expanded to include reasons the students cite for dropping out and their selected characteristics. This expansion of the database would provide the public with specific information about their reasons for dropping out and would reveal if there is in fact a link to remedial, non-transferable courses as this statement claims. It would also provide the public with accurate data to determine if the local K-12 education system is responsible for the drop-out rate or if the selected characteristics demonstrate other factors influencing the drop-out rate. An expanded database will allow the VCCCD and VCOE Taskforce (Recommendation 02) to address the reason students drop out of community college with the goal of decreasing the drop-out rate.

FI-03 Students taking remedial, non-transferable courses, use a disproportionate amount of financial aid and other district resources that could otherwise be used by students taking transferable courses. This includes costs for these remedial, non-transferable courses that detract from the total number of courses available for transferring students.

Please see comments in FI-01 and FI-02.

FI-04 Providing remedial courses at the community college has put a higher and unnecessary burden on the taxpayer to provide the same education twice (once in K-12 and again in college). This includes the time and energy expended by student and faculty, as well as the cost of facility use.

Please see comments in FI-01 and FI-02.

FI-05 It is more cost-effective for taxpayers to use alternative methods of remediation, such as on-line programs, adult education, vocational training and private tutorial programs.

We disagree with this statement. The references provided do not offer substantiating data that quantifies the cost of the suggested alternative programs, and as a result we have no way of determining that private tutoring, or purchased on-line programs are in fact more cost-effective for taxpayers.

FI-06 The overall average public high school graduation rate for San Luis Obispo, Santa Barbara, and Ventura Counties is 72%, which is lower than the national average.

We disagree with the use of Ventura County data averaged with San Luis Obispo and Santa Barbara counties. We also take exception with the use of data that is an average from 1989 to 2009. The same data source as cited in the report (Postsecondary Education Commission www.cpec.ca.gov/FiscalData/CACountyEconTable.asp?D=HSGrad) was accessed on April 30, 2013. It lists current Ventura County graduation rates as follows: 2005- 83.0%, 2006- 82.1%, 2007- 82.2%, 2008- 82.0%, 2009- 83.1%. These rates exceeded the state average rates during the same time period and were within two percentage points of the national graduation rates as opposed to 10 percentage points below the national average as incorrectly stated in the report.

FI-07 The 2008-2009 percentages of Ventura County students that scored at or above the proficiency level in English was 58.4%.

We disagree with this statement as inaccurate and outdated. It is not clear why the Grand Jury chose to use data that is four years old when current 2011-12 data is readily available from VCOE. The new data for English language arts proficiency finds that 62.5% of Ventura County high school students are Advanced or Proficient according to the state tests.

FI-08 The 2008-2009 percentages of Ventura county students that scored at or above the proficiency level in math was 59.4%.

We disagree with this statement as inaccurate and outdated. It is not clear why the Grand Jury chose to use data that is four years old when current 2011-12 data is readily available from VCOE. The new data for mathematics proficiency finds that 63.1% of Ventura County high school students are Advanced or Proficient according to the state tests.

FI-09 Nationwide, community colleges spend more than \$3.7 billion a year, which includes \$1.4 billion for remedial education after graduating from high school, which could provide classes and services for college-prepared students.

Please see comments in FI-01 and FI-02.

FI-11 A recent survey of the various community colleges in Ventura County revealed that there were 9,913 remedial students. Of those, 2,067 were taking remedial English and 6,211 were taking remedial math in the Fall of 2011. There may be students taking both English and math which could account for discrepancies in numbers. Therefore, these college resources are not available to college-prepared students.

Please see comments in FI-01 and FI-02.

FI-12 In the Fall of 2011 there were 354 remedial courses in the various community colleges within the VCCCD. In the Spring of 2012 there were 325 remedial courses offered in the VCCCD. Therefore these college resources are not available to college-prepared students.

Please see comments in FI-01 and FI-02.

FI-13 There is no evidence that there is a task force with the VCCCD and the Superintendent of Schools.

We disagree with this statement. The Grand Jury did not contact the Superintendent of Schools for information relative to collaborative efforts between VCCCD and VCOE. Already there are two groups that act like a task force and address alignment issues cited in the Grand Jury Report. Both groups work to provide a consistent and supported continuum of learning in Ventura County. The Ventura County Regional P-16 Council has been working since 2007 to address preschool through college support that will reduce achievement gaps, prepare high school students for college, increase college completion for all Ventura County students, and to generally provide educational support and awareness to improve academic excellence. The P-16 Council includes 40 key decision-makers in education, business, parent groups and community agencies. Since its inception, the P-16 Council has initiated linkages between the higher education entities to provide mentoring and tutoring to students in identified high schools. It is designed to facilitate partnerships, develop broad-based collaboration and increase awareness of the importance of education in our collective futures. In addition, there is ongoing communication between the VCOE Superintendent and VCCCD Chancellor and their staffs. Staff members from VCOE participate in the VCCCD Citizen Advisory Committee providing critical input on how the college district and local high schools can continuously improve their instructional alignment and services.

RECOMMENDATIONS HAVE NOT YET BEEN IMPLEMENTED, BUT WILL BE IMPLEMENTED IN THE FUTURE.

R-01 The Ventura County Superintendent of Schools, in conjunction with the Chancellor of Ventura County Community College District, shall meet and discuss a set of learning outcomes and curriculum expectations that are consistent with students' entry to the VCCD.

This recommendation will be implemented in the future as part of the state of California's recent adoption of the Common Core State Standards. The new standards identify learning outcomes and curriculum expectations to ensure students are college and career ready. Implementation of the new standards and assessments will begin in 2014-15. Please see Common Core State Standards Systems Implementation Plan for California (DOC; 9MB; Revised 11-Oct-2012) | PDF (Revised 11-Oct-2012) for the full implementation plan.

In addition, California is part of the Smarter Balanced Assessment Consortium which is developing the Common Core State Standards assessments. To increase the connections to college readiness, the governing states of the Smarter Balanced Assessment Consortium have approved the initial College Content Readiness Policy. The College Content Readiness Policy will guide the interpretation of test scores from the grade eleven Smarter Balanced assessments for course placement in grade twelve and in higher education. Smarter Balanced state representatives, including those from K-12 and higher education, worked to develop College Content Readiness Policy to determine levels of high school students' readiness for entry-level, credit-bearing coursework at a college or university or entry into the high-skill workforce. The complete English-language arts/literacy and mathematics initial ALDs and revised college content readiness policy are available on the Smarter Balanced Achievement Level Descriptors and College Content Readiness Web page at <http://www.smarterbalanced.org/achievement-level-descriptors-and-college-readiness/>.

Ventura County P-16 Council will continue to focus on a continuum of learning for all Ventura County students. P-16 meetings will include on the agenda discussion of the Common Core State Standards and new assessment system. This will strengthen aligned learning outcomes and curriculum expectations in Ventura County.

R-02 The Ventura County Superintendent of Schools, in conjunction with the Chancellor of Ventura County Community College District, create a taskforce to develop a partnership that will prepare a set of learning outcomes and curriculum expectations in the areas of English, reading and math.

Please see comments in FI-13 and R-01

R-03 The VCCCD consider a policy that each college in the VCCCD develops an assessment for English, reading and math with the same placement outcome.

Ventura County Office of Education staff recommends that the VCCCD use the Smarter Balanced assessments and College Content Readiness Policy described in comments for R-01 to determine placement outcome.

Please see comments in R-01.