

Response to Grand Jury Report Form

Report Title: Charter School Implementation of State Mandated Sex Education

Report Date: April 2, 2020

Response by: Cindy McCarthy Title: Assistant Director

FINDINGS / CONCLUSIONS

- I (we) agree with the Facts / Conclusions numbered: _____
- I (we) disagree wholly or partially with the Facts / Conclusions numbered:
see attached
(Attach a statement specifying any portions of the Facts / Conclusions that are disputed; including an explanation of the reasons.)

RECOMMENDATIONS

- Recommendations numbered ^{C-1 C-2 C-3} R-1 thru R-7 have been implemented.
(Attach a summary describing the implemented actions and date completed.)
- Recommendations number _____ have not yet been implemented, but will be implemented in the future.
(Attach a time frame for the implementation.)
- Recommendations numbered _____ require further analysis.
- Recommendations numbered _____ will not be implemented because they are not warranted or are not reasonable.

Date: 6-16-20

Signed: Cindy McCarthy

Number of pages attached: 73



June 16, 2020

Dear Mr. Hurst and Ms. Margolis,

This letter outlines Bridges Charter School's response to the Ventura County Grand Jury's Report dated April 2, 2020. The following are our responses to the additional inquiries posed:

1. Bridges Charter School has approved an amended board policy and procedure dated 6-15-2020. Please see attached policy BP 6142.1. Although our original response stated our intent to adopt a new board policy on January 13, 2020 we have since amended this policy adopted on 1-13-2020 to reflect changes and updates to meet state guidelines as outlined in the grand jury report.
2. In our original response we stated we have adopted the *PROTECT* Curriculum in response to AB 329 and AB 1227. In addition, we offer a Comprehensive Sexual Health program and HIV/AIDS Prevention Education Program as outlined by the state under the California Healthy Youth Act. We have recently purchased a new full curriculum called *Positive Prevention Plus* and will be implanting this curriculum in the fall of 2020. *Positive Prevention Plus* is a comprehensive evidence-based sexual health and teen pregnancy prevention curriculum for grades 7-12 and out-of- school youth, written in compliance with the updated California Education Code including "The California Healthy Youth Act" (AB 329) and "Sexual Harassment and Violence Instruction"(SB 695) and the National Health Education Standards.

More information can be obtained at:

<https://www.positivepreventionplus.com/curriculum/sexual-health-education>

<https://protectnow.org/our-program-2/>

Given both curriculum are purchased copy written materials we do not feel it would be appropriate or within legal guidelines to place the entire curriculum online but instead have opted for an overview. However, we will have a copy in our school office for preview.

3. Letters addressing state mandate on implementing a Comprehensive Sexual Health Program will be provided to our 7th grade families at the beginning of each school year in hard copy, in digital format via Parent Square which is our parent communication platform, as well as accessible on our website at: https://www.bridgescharter.org/apps/pages/index.jsp?uREC_ID=992474&type=d&pREC_ID=1946563

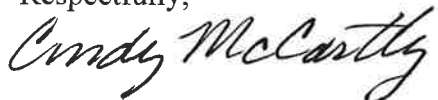
#4. Through #7.

Parents are provided an electronic copy of our Family Handbook and made aware of our policies that are publicly available on our website. In addition, we send a letter to parents and guardians in alignment with Ed Code Sections 51240 and 51937-51939 with the purpose of informing parents and guardians of our Comprehensive Sexual Health Program and HIV/AIDS Preventative Education. Parents are informed of their right to request that students(s) be excused from all or part of the Sexual Health Education and/or Surveys. (See attached) In the notification given to 7th grade parents or guardians parents are:

- provided an overview handout of the curriculum as well as the opportunity to preview the curriculum in the front office
- asked to sign and acknowledge participation in curriculum and/or surveys
- given an option to opt out of all or part of the curriculum/surveys
- notified the student will not receive any academic penalty for opting out
- informed of optional curriculum offered and provided with instruction and materials that align with “negotiation and refusal skills to assist pupils in overcoming peer pressure and using effective decision making skills to avoid high-risk activities.’ See attached
- provided access to preview the student survey

All documents and surveys are posted online at: https://www.bridgescharter.org/apps/pages/index.jsp?uREC_ID=992474&type=d&pREC_ID=1946563

Respectfully,




Cindy McCarthy
Assistant Director
Bridges Charter School

Bridges Charter will provide students in grades 7 with a **Comprehensive Sexual Health program and HIV/AIDS Prevention Education** as outlined by the state under the **California Healthy Youth Act** to include 5 primary purposes:

- Provide pupils with the knowledge and skills necessary to protect their sexual and reproductive health from HIV and other sexually transmitted infections and from unintended pregnancy;
- Provide pupils with the knowledge and skills they need to develop healthy attitudes concerning adolescent growth and development, body image, gender, sexual orientation, relationships, marriage, and family;
- Promote understanding of sexuality as a normal part of human development;
- Ensure pupils receive integrated, comprehensive, accurate, and unbiased sexual health and HIV prevention instruction and provide educators with clear tools and guidance to accomplish that end;
- Provide pupils with the knowledge and skills necessary to have healthy, positive, and safe relationships and behaviors.

Furthermore Bridges Charter shall align with the following mandate:

- Bridges Charter will provide a parent/guardian notification of the curriculum and surveys on sexual health and human trafficking that includes a separate, easy-to-use opt out form for parents/guardians to sign and return at the beginning of the school year or upon enrollment for 7th grade families.
- A parent/guardian may request in writing that his/her child be excused from participating in all or part of the HIV/AIDS prevention or sexual health education and/or survey.
- The student will not receive any academic penalty. Alternate educational curricula will be provided on "negotiation and refusal skills to assist the pupil in overcoming peer pressure and using effective decision making skills to avoid high-risk activities."
- Written and audiovisual educational materials used in comprehensive sexual health education and HIV prevention education will be made available for inspection in the school office upon request.
- The comprehensive sexual health education or HIV prevention education will be taught by school personnel.
- Comprehensive sexual health and HIV prevention education **are both mandated instruction** and shall occur once in middle school and once in high school. The *EC* defines comprehensive sexual health education as "education regarding human development and sexuality, including education on pregnancy, contraception, and STIs" and HIV prevention education as "instruction on the nature of HIV and acquired immune deficiency syndrome (AIDS), methods of transmission, strategies to reduce the risk of HIV infection, and social and public health issues related to HIV and AIDS."
- Abstinence may not be discussed in isolation. The *EC* requires that instruction and materials include information that abstinence is the only certain way to prevent HIV, other STIs, and unintended pregnancy. However, it also states: "Instruction shall provide information about the value of delaying sexual activity **while also providing** medically accurate information on other methods of preventing HIV and other STIs and pregnancy." "Abstinence-only" sex education, which offers abstinence as the only option for preventing STIs and unintended pregnancy, is not permitted in California public schools.
- All instruction and materials must support and align with the purposes of the California Healthy Youth Act and with each other. Instruction and materials may not be in conflict with or undermine each other or any of the purposes of the law. For example, schools may not use materials that, in promoting abstinence, focus exclusively on the failure rates or perceived disadvantages of condoms or contraception.

Bridges Charter School 	Board Policy- Comprehensive Sexual Health and HIV/AIDS Prevention Instruction		
Policy Number: <p style="text-align: center;">6142.1</p>	Adopted: <p style="text-align: center;">04/22/14</p>	Revised: <p style="text-align: center;">01/13/20</p>	Replaced:

The Bridges Charter School's Governing Board recognizes that the purpose of the school's sexual health and HIV/AIDS prevention instruction is to provide students with the knowledge and skills necessary to protect them from unintended pregnancy and sexually transmitted infections and to encourage students to develop healthy attitudes concerning adolescent growth and development, body image, gender roles, sexual orientation, dating, marriage, and family. The Board therefore desires to provide a well-planned sequence of instruction on comprehensive sexual health and HIV/AIDS prevention.

Bridges Charter will provide students in grades 7 with a ***Comprehensive Sexual Health program and HIV/AIDS Prevention Education*** as outlined by the state under the ***California Healthy Youth Act*** to include 5 primary purposes:

- Provide pupils with the knowledge and skills necessary to protect their sexual and reproductive health from HIV and other sexually transmitted infections and from unintended pregnancy;
- Provide pupils with the knowledge and skills they need to develop healthy attitudes concerning adolescent growth and development, body image, gender, sexual orientation, relationships, marriage, and family;
- Promote understanding of sexuality as a normal part of human development;
- Ensure pupils receive integrated, comprehensive, accurate, and unbiased sexual health and HIV prevention instruction and provide educators with clear tools and guidance to accomplish that end;
- Provide pupils with the knowledge and skills necessary to have healthy, positive, and safe relationships and behaviors.

POLICY DETAILS:

1. Goals for the Bridges Charter School's health education program shall be designed to promote student wellness and shall include, but not be limited to, goals for nutrition education and physical activity.

2. The Director or designee shall provide periodic reports to the Board regarding the implementation and effectiveness of the school's health education program which may include, but not be limited to, a description of the school's program and the extent to which it is aligned with the state's content standards and curriculum framework, the amount of time allotted for health instruction at each grade level.

Parent/Guardian Consent

1. The law prohibits active consent for any part of comprehensive sexual health education or HIV prevention education. **Passive** (not active) parent/guardian notification is required for comprehensive sexual health education and HIV prevention education, either at the beginning of the school year or at least 14 days prior to instruction. Bridges will send a letter 14 days prior to the curriculum being presented in the class which will include a link to materials in which parents can preview.
2. A parent/guardian may request in writing that his/her child be excused from participating in HIV/AIDS prevention or sexual health education. Students so excused by their parents/guardians shall be given an alternative educational activity. (Education Code 51240, 51939)
3. A student shall not be subject to disciplinary action, academic penalty, or other sanction if the student's parent/guardian declines to permit the student to receive the instruction. (Education Code 51939)

Legal Reference:

EDUCATION CODE

220 Prohibition of discrimination
8850.5 Family relationships and parenting education
48980 Notice at beginning of term
51202 Instruction in personal and public health and safety
51203 Instruction on alcohol, narcotics and dangerous drugs
51210 Areas of study
51210.8 Health education curriculum
51240 Excuse from instruction due to religious beliefs
51260-51269 Drug education
51513 Materials containing questions about beliefs or practices
51880-51881.5 Health education, legislative findings and intent
51890-51891 Comprehensive health education programs
51930-51939 Comprehensive Sexual Health and HIV/AIDS Prevention Education Act
(cf. 5030 - Student Wellness)
(cf. 6142.8 - Comprehensive Health Education)¹



Hello 7th Grade Families!

As a part of the 7th grade curriculum, your student(s) is/are enrolled in Health/Sex Education through Science this semester. Included in this course are units relating to family living, human sexuality in which human reproductive organs and their functions may be described, illustrated, or discussed as well as instruction to students on human trafficking. Instruction will be provided by a credentialed Bridges staff member who has been provided training and support in the curriculum. In doing so Bridges is fulfilling the mandate as outlined in the California Healthy Youth act to offer a Comprehensive Sexual Health program and HIV/AIDS Prevention Education.

This letter is to inform you of your right to request that your student(s) be excused from the family life unit due to personal or religious beliefs. These rights are included in the California Education Code Sections 51240 and 51937-51939 but do not apply to descriptions or illustrations of human reproductive organs which may appear in a textbook adopted pursuant to law on physiology, biology, zoology, general science, health, or personal hygiene.

Any written or audiovisual materials to be used in a class in which human reproductive organs and their functions and processes are described, illustrated, or discussed, shall be available for inspection upon request or accessed on the Bridges website. www.bridgescharter.org

If you require additional information about this unit please feel free to email me.

Sincerely,
Mr. John P. Sanders
john.sanders@bridgescharter.org
CORE Science Teacher

Please detach the bottom portion and return by _____

Pursuant to California Education Code Sections 51240 and 51937-51939, I request that my student(s)

(student name)

_____ Participate in all Family Life Education Units – as outlined in the California Healthy Youth Act.

_____ NOT participate in the Family Life Education Units outlined in the California Healthy youth Act. .
• No academic penalty will be incurred should a student/parent opt out of the curriculum.
• Alternate assignments will be provided and will include the following content:
○ Negotiating and Refusal Skills to Assist Pupils in Overcoming Peer Pressure and Using Effective Decision Making

_____ Participate in limited sections as defined below:

Parent Signature

Date



Dear Parent or Guardian,

Your child may be asked to take a survey at school on sexual behaviors. Participation in the survey is voluntary on the part of the student. The survey is anonymous. No names or any other identifying information is connected to the answers except for the name of the school.

You as a parent may excuse your child from participation in the survey by written submittal.

If you have questions, please contact Cindy McCarthy 805-492-3569.

If you wish to view the survey, you may do so at the school office or on our school webpage under the "Current Families" tab, then by selecting Health Education in the drop down menu.

<https://www.bridgescharter.org/>

Sincerely,

Cindy McCarthy
Assistant Director
Bridges Charter School

Parent Signature _____ Date _____

In response to AB 1227 Bridges Charter School is required to teach California's school-age population how to avoid becoming victims of exploitation, help them understand the problem of human exploitation and learn ways to address the problem through service initiatives. At least once in middle school, 7th grade being the target group, we will provide instruction to students on human trafficking including:

- The prevalence, nature, and strategies to reduce the risk of human trafficking
- Techniques to set healthy boundaries
- How to safely seek assistance

The curriculum used will be from the *PROTECT* Program <http://protectnow.org/our-program-2/>

The middle school curriculum (appropriate for ages 11-14) used will be based on:

Protecting a Masterpiece

This lesson builds upon the concept of the inner voice, introducing the establishment of boundaries through use of words, body language, time, and physical space. It includes the importance of emotional pauses and an emphasis on responding to their gut feeling.

The students are taught about the many forms that child abuse can take (physical, emotional, neglect, sexual), and that there are also different types of human trafficking, such as forced labor or commercial sexual exploitation.

Optional Components for Elementary grade (ages 4-11) are:

Safe People, Safe Places, Safe Choices

This lesson establishes foundational concepts critical to ending human trafficking, focusing on equipping students with tools to develop personal boundaries that will help keep them physically and emotionally safe, both online and in-person.

Health Education Resources:

Bridges website:

https://www.bridgescharter.org/apps/pages/index.jsp?uREC_ID=992474&type=d&pREC_ID=1946563

Positive Prevention Plus - A comprehensive evidence-based sexual health and teen pregnancy prevention curriculum for grades 7-12 and out-of-school youth, written in compliance with the updated California Education Code including "The California Healthy Youth Act" (AB 329) and "Sexual Harassment and Violence Instruction" (SB 695) and the National Health Education Standards.

***PROTECT* Program - Protecting a Masterpiece**