



HEALTH, EDUCATION, AND SOCIAL SERVICES COMMITTEE

MISSION STATEMENT

The mission of the Health, Education, and Social Services Committee of the 2015-2016 Kern County Grand Jury pursuant to California Penal Code §§925 and 933.5 is to observe, investigate and report on health, education, and social service departments, safeguard the public funds and recommend reasonable action addressing concerns of the community. The Committee's concern is not only to make the citizens of Kern County aware of its findings but also make long-term positive impact and economic recommendations on behalf of the community.

Members: Earlene Hightower, Chairperson, Gary Chaffin, Perry Fox, Phillip Wedeking

HEALTH, EDUCATION & SOCIAL SERVICES COMMITTEE

SUMMARY OF ACTIVITIES

- Kern County Animal Control Services
- Miriam Jamison Child Center
- Kern Regional Occupational Center
- North Bakersfield High School
- Highland High School
- Tehachapi Unified School District
- Standard School District
- Fruitvale School District
- Lakeside School District
- Panama-Buena Vista School District
- Bakersfield City School District
- Richland School District
- Bakersfield City Fire Department Station #1
- Department of Human Services
- Kern Housing Authority
- Kern Medical Board of Governors
- Homeless Riverbed Cleanup Project

The Health, Education and Social Services Committee interviewed and responded to four complaints.

Additionally, the Health, Education and Social Services Committee toured:

- Kern County Crime Lab
- Kern County Sheriff Department K-9 Unit
- County of Kern Elections Department
- NASA facility at Edwards AFB
- Kern County Sheriff Department Search and Rescue
- Kern County Coroner Office
- Kern County Sheriff Department Bomb Squad

KERN COUNTY ANIMAL SHELTER

Fruitvale Site

SUMMARY:

The 2015-2016 Kern County Grand Jury Health, Education and Social Services Committee (HESS) reviewed the 2013-2014 Ad Hoc Committee report on animal control for both cities and county. The HESS Committee noted numerous recommendations to the agency and decided the current Committee would visit the county facility on Fruitvale Avenue for this report. The Committee only reported findings as they related to this county facility.

PURPOSE OF INQUIRY:

Pursuant to California Code §925, the 2015-2016 Kern County Grand Jury (Grand Jury), has the authority to investigate and report on Kern County Animal Services (KCAS). Due to the continuing publicity animal control has garnered in the media and reviewed the report of the 2013-2014 Ad Hoc Committee, the HESS Committee decided to investigate the current status of the 22 recommendations.

PROCESS:

The Committee reviewed the 2013-2014 Ad Hoc Committee report, reviewed the latest animal control monthly report, met with the interim director and staff, and reviewed the relevant articles in The Bakersfield Californian newspaper. The Committee also took an extensive tour of the animal control facility on Fruitvale Avenue.

BACKGROUND:

In August 2013 the City of Bakersfield notified Kern County it would not be renewing the contract for sheltering facilities. The County completed its new facility at 3951 Fruitvale Avenue and moved in September 29, 2013.

FINDINGS:

The following findings are numbered to correspond with the recommendations found in the 2013-2014 Ad Hoc Committee report. If additional clarification is needed, refer to the above report found on the Kern County Grand Jury website www.co.kern.ca.us/grandjury.

- F1. The Committee found no progress towards locating, inspecting, regulating and fining illegal “backyard breeders”.
- F2. The fee schedule is reviewed periodically and has not changed since the Ad Hoc Committee report.
- F3. The requirement to place a license number in an advertisement for sale of animals is not within the legal authority of the County. This issue is still being reviewed by the department.
- F4. Animal “return to owner” rates in the county shelter show a steady increase over the Ad Hoc report:
 - 2013 – 3.6%
 - 2014 – 4.1%
 - 2015 – 4.5% YTD
- F5. Euthanasia totals reflect a decline since 2013. The numbers are:
 - 2013 --- 14,825
 - 2014 --- 7,037
 - 2015 --- 6,133 (projected)
- F6. The current county ordinance requires a pass/fail grade for all licensed animal facilities. In order to institute a letter grade as recommended would require a county ordinance change from the Kern County Board of Supervisors.
- F7. The current website is now “user friendly” and allows an owner to easily recognize if their animal is in the county facility.
- F8. The shelter currently has volunteers to monitor flyers, social media and current inventory to see if any matches may exist. The shelter has locations to post flyers for lost animals.
- F9. The quality of pictures on the website (www.co.kern.ca.us/acd/) is now determined to be adequate. The staff has received training on taking better quality pictures of animals since the Ad Hoc Committee Report.
- F10. The Ad Hoc Committee recommended the website to include dates of intake, adoption and reunification. The animal services office now includes the intake date on the website.

- F11. The surgery suite is partially constructed. The previous budget was not adequate to build and meet state standards. The funds are now available and the suite should be completed by the end of the fiscal year.
- F12. The recommendation in the Ad Hoc Committee report to add more animal control officers is not applicable to KCAS.
- F13. The KCAS currently reviews owner redemption fees on a case by case basis to determine if certain fees can be waived. There have been instances where the shelter will hold an animal for an owner until the funds to release the pet have been acquired.
- F14. According to KCAS staff, county and city shelters work relations appear to be improving.
- F15. The County Administrative Officer has offered grant writing assistance to KCAS. They have recently received two grants.
- F16. The Interim Director has insured that the current program is fair and equitable regarding foster and rescue groups.
- F17. Recommendation R17 in the Ad Hoc Committee report was not applicable to the KCAS.
- F18. According to KCAS, current staffing level of animal officers is adequate at this time.
- F19. The use of “hiding boxes” for feral cats has been resolved. KCAS use only as needed.
- F20. KCAS does not offer special benefits to animal foster homes.
- F21. KCAS is exploring the possibility of publicizing The Bakersfield Pet Food Pantry.
- F22. The practice of accepting animals outside the county jurisdiction will need to have clear, consistent policies to avoid confusion.

COMMENTS:

Under the Interim Director, the volunteer coordinator position has been instrumental in increasing the number of active volunteers which now exceeds 120. Volunteers at the shelter seemed to be enjoying the environment and their work with the animals.

The facility was clean and bright, the feeling upon entering was welcoming. The staff appeared to be professional, enthusiastic, and engaged with their duties.

The Grand Jury discovered in the past 10 years there have been approximately 14 Directors or Interim Directors managing the county shelters. The current Interim Director gave us a very comprehensive overview of their services and the Committee was impressed with his knowledge and enthusiasm. After the closing of the inquiry, the Interim Director was named permanent Director.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

- R1. The Grand Jury recommends KCAS continue investigating ways to identify “backyard breeders”. (Finding 1)
- R2. The Grand Jury recommends the surgery suite be completed as soon as possible. (Finding 11)

NOTES:

- The Kern County Animal Services should post a copy of this report where it will be available for public review.
- Persons wishing to receive an email notification of newly released reports may sign up at www.co.kern.kern.ca.us/grandjury
- Present and past Kern County Grand Jury Final Reports and Responses can be accessed on the Kern County Grand Jury website www.co.kern.ca.us/grandjury

RESPONSE REQUIRED WITHIN 90 DAYS:

**PRESIDING JUDGE
KERN COUNTY SUPERIOR COURT
1415 TRUXTUN AVENUE, SUITE 212
BAKERSFIELD, CA 93301**

**CC: FOREPERSON
KERN COUNTY GRAND JURY
1415 TRUXTUN AVENUE, SUITE 600
BAKERSFIELD, CA 93301**

Kern County Board of Supervisors
Response to Grand Jury Final Report
Kern County Animal Shelter Fruitvale Site

Response to Findings:

The Board of Supervisors notes that the Grand Jury's finding are substantially correct.

Response to Recommendations:

R1: *The Grand Jury recommends KCAS continue investigating ways to identify "backyard breeders."*

The term "backyard breeder" is a general term, presumably for irresponsible breeding of dogs. We concur in principle with the Grand Jury's recommendation and the department of Animal Services has adopted a progressive and comprehensive approach to this systemic problem in Kern County.

R2: *The Grand Jury recommends the surgery suite be completed as soon as possible.*

We concur with the Grand Jury's recommendation that the surgery suite be completed as soon as possible.

KERN COUNTY JUNIOR HIGH SCHOOL LUNCH PROGRAM

How happy are the students with the food?

PREFACE:

The 2015-2016 Kern County Grand Jury (Grand Jury) chose to inquire into the quality of the food served at the 7th and 8th grade levels in Kern County. It has come to our attention through multiple sources that the food might not be to the liking of the students and much of the food is not being consumed. Our goal was to determine if this is actually the case, if the menu is not to their liking, or if there is some other reason for the dissatisfaction.

PURPOSE OF INQUIRY:

The Grand Jury Health, Education and Social Service Committee (Committee) pursuant to the California Penal Code §§925 and 933 authorizes the Grand Jury to investigate and report on departments throughout Kern County. The Committee chose to look at the quality of the food, the methods used in the kitchen areas and the amount of uneaten food. The Committee also investigated how the federally assisted meals program affects the local lunch programs.

PROCESS:

The Committee reviewed the State, County and Federal guidelines for school lunch programs, visited school sites and ate lunch with the students. The Committee met with Principals, Vice-Principals, Food Service Directors, Directors of Maintenance, Deans and Cafeteria Staff at various schools. Regulations were studied and discussed, school menus were reviewed and the Committee observed the disposal of uneaten food by the students.

BACKGROUND:

The National School Lunch Program (NSLP) is a federally assisted meals program operating in over 100,000 public and nonprofit private schools and residential child care institutions. In 2012 the program provided nutritionally balanced, low cost or free lunches to more than 31 million children each school day. School lunch programs are primarily funded by the NSLP. The United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) annually issues income eligibility guidelines for free and reduced priced meals. Schools throughout Kern County have meals prepared from various sources. The methods observed were:

- Central kitchens that prepare and distribute lunches to many schools each day
- Prepackaged and frozen food heated on premises
- Fresh produce delivered and inspected on sight and prepared in the kitchen
- One school visited has an onsite chef that prepares meals daily by using the supplied food and giving it his own touch to enhance the meal

FACTS:

- A. The Committee visited schools serving about 560 to 1500 students during the lunch period.
- B. The NSLP was established in 1945 by the Richard B. Russell National School Lunch Act and signed into law by President Harry S. Truman in 1946. It was originally established as a way of propping up food prices by absorbing the farm food surplus.
- C. Approximately 272 schools in Kern County participate in the NSLP.
- D. Richland Junior High had a unique idea implemented in 2009. They have a “share table” where unopened packaged foods are placed for students to take as they elect. This reduces the disposal of food.
- E. Kern County Schools are funded on a per meal basis provided they follow the nutritional guidelines of the NSLP.
- F. Meals come from a number of different sources. They come from on-site production, NSLP approved vendor supplied meals, or by the local school board’s centralized kitchen.

FINDINGS:

- F1. The schools visited were very efficient in getting the students through the lunch line with minimal delay. This is partly due to the automated system used to oversee student payment. The keypad used allows the student to enter their PIN to charge for the lunch at the appropriate price. This system also allows for more accurate reporting for NSLP reimbursement.
- F2. Cafeteria staffs consisted of 3 to 11 workers.
- F3. Richland Jr. High School’s “share table” was well accepted. There were a few items on the table when we arrived. As we ate, some items were added and students removed items as desired. When we left the table was empty.
- F4. Some cafeterias had theme bars, e.g.; the baked potato bar and taco bar were two of the most popular.
- F5. Most cafeterias visited had salad and/or fruit bars.
- F6. Free lunches accounted for 36% to 94% of the meals served.
- F7. Milk choices were 1% fat or fat free chocolate. Lactaid is served to students with special dietary needs. Chocolate milk was selected by students 9 times out of 10.

- F8. Special meals are provided to students with dietary restrictions. This accounts for approximately 1% of the meals served.
- F9. Kitchens were well equipped with adequate coolers, warmers and other equipment.
- F10. Some schools offered bottled water for sale.
- F11. The average amount of food discarded by Committee observation for all locations was approximately 12%, although one Food Service Director felt the waste was closer to 35% at their location. A study of Boston Public Schools showed that, on average, 26% of their food is discarded.
- F12. The older cafeterias appeared to be less noisy than the newer buildings.
- F13. The meals appeared to fall within the USDA nutritional guidelines.
- F14. The Committee found no suggestion boxes for students to comment on the lunch program.

COMMENTS:

Sixteen meals were consumed by the Committee members in six different school districts, resulting in various opinions. In one instance, the meal was partially consumed as served, however when salt and pepper were added it made an overall improvement to the taste of the food. It is understood that sodium is restricted by the NSLP and seasoning is the missing ingredient in most of the meals sampled.

The general consensus of the Committee is the lunch program follows the guidelines of the NSLP in order to get federal reimbursement. The guidelines of the program, as stated by an interviewee, “tie the hands” of the staff to provide a more flavorful and varying meal for our students. A challenge for schools that take part in the NSLP is the rising costs. According to a School Lunch and Breakfast Cost Study, one in four school districts reported costs for school lunches above the program reimbursement rate. The additional cost must then be supplemented by school district general funds which puts a strain on budgets. Additional costs also make it difficult to meet federally mandated nutrition requirements because using the “best palatable foods” for students becomes too expensive. For example, a USDA report in 2008 found that some school systems in California raised meal prices to keep up with “steep increases in food costs.” The school districts raised prices for paying students, while keeping prices the same for reduced-price meals. This method of cost adjustment leaves the paying students’ parents or school district bearing the burden of the price increase.

The Committee came to the conclusion that when offered a daily choice of entrees, the food was better received by the students. Schools that offered salad bars seemed to have more satisfied diners. Even with the restrictive guidelines the schools staffs are doing a good job providing meals to the children.

The Committee would like to thank those who assisted in answering the Committee's questions and gave tours of the various facilities. The Principals and Vice-Principals were involved with the students during the lunch period. The staffs were happy to convey information and provide a tour of their operations.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

- R1. Schools should implement the "Richland share table" concept. (Finding F3)
- R2. More schools should consider the possibility of "Theme Bars". (Finding F4)
- R3. More schools should implement and/or expand their salad/fruit bars. (Finding F5)
- R4. Schools should examine the loud sound levels in the cafeterias to see if there are methods available to improve the acoustics. (Finding F12)
- R5. Schools should create a questionnaire or add a suggestion box for the students to express their opinion of the food service program. (Finding F14)

NOTES:

- The following school districts should post a copy of this report where it will be available for public review:
 - Bakersfield City School District
 - Fruitvale School District
 - Lakeside School District
 - Panama-Buena Vista School District
 - Richland School District
 - Standard School District
- Persons wishing to receive an email notification of newly released reports may sign up at: www.co.kern.ca.us/grandjury.
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RESPONSE REQUIRED WITHIN 90 DAYS

**PRESIDING JUDGE
KERN COUNTY SUPERIOR COURT
1415 TRUXTUN AVENUE, SUITE 212
BAKERSFIELD, CA 93301**

**CC: FOREPERSON
KERN COUNTY GRAND JURY
1415 TRUXTUN AVENUE, SUITE 600
BAKERSFIELD, CA 93301**



Standard School District

Learning Today for a Better Tomorrow

BOARD OF TRUSTEES
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Glynda Martin, Director, Educational Services
Denita Maughan, Ph.D., Director, Student Support Services

May 27, 2016

The Honorable John Somers, Presiding Judge
Kern County Superior Court
1415 Truxtun Avenue, Suite 212
Bakersfield, CA 93301

Dear Judge Somers:

Please accept this letter as the Standard School District response to the Final Report on the **Kern County Junior High School Lunch Program** released on February 3, 2016. We apologize for the delay in response and appreciate the Grand Jury's interest in student nutrition.

We agree with the Facts listed in the report as a synopsis of the National School Lunch Program and believe after the on-site visit the members of the Grand Jury have a better understanding of our program.

Regarding findings we agree with many of the comments listed. We know from a USDA audit in 2014-15 the cafeteria visited is in compliance in all areas of administering a National School Lunch Program and was commended by evaluators for our high standards, variety of menu items and overall excellent program. The one finding in your report on "no suggestion boxes for students to comment on the lunch program" is but one avenue for students to comment on breakfast or lunch. We have found it to be more engaging and collaborative for our students to meet as a student leadership group to provide input and feedback on the program or conduct periodic surveys with the students for suggestions or feedback. Additionally, some of our students have participated in a food show taste-test of new items for incorporation into our breakfast or lunch program.

Regarding the Recommendation section of the report we offer the following as additional information or incorporation in our program:

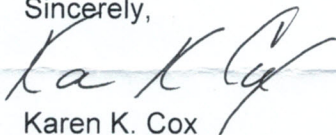
- R1. The recommendation is currently implemented at both Breakfast and Afterschool Snack. The recommendation will not be implemented for lunch as we do not have enough pre-packaged foods to utilize the share table and still be in compliance with health and safety requirements.

- R2. The recommendation has not yet been implemented, and we believe it is a good idea and will be implemented in the next school year. Standard School District will implement a "Theme Bar" in the 2016/2017 school year and hope that this will provide students with the opportunity to try different types of food from varying locals.
- R3. The recommendation on salad/fruit bars has been part of our program for three years and we offer a variety of salad/fruit which changes on a weekly basis.
- R4. The recommendation to examine the loud sound levels in the cafeteria is already implemented. New acoustic board was replaced in the cafeteria at the beginning of the 2015/2016 school year. In addition, we monitor the decibel levels periodically and we are in the range of acceptable levels.
- R5. The recommendation of a suggestion box will not be implemented as we believe it is better to have a collaborative approach to new ideas and feedback. We have been successful in meeting with the student leadership team or sending out periodic surveys to the students where they can give their opinions of the Nutrition Services Program and menu items. We utilize the survey results to make suggested changes that are within our Federal and State guidelines and fit within our school's Wellness Policy.

We are pleased with the Grand Jury's report and want to thank them for the visit, compliments of our program during their visit and report on our program and the NSLP program. This program is vital to providing a healthy nutritious lunch to our students many of whom qualify for a free lunch and without this program may go hungry.

If you have additional questions regarding our response please feel free to contact Tracey Dougherty, Director, Nutrition Services at (661) 392-2110.

Sincerely,



Karen K. Cox
Assistant Superintendent, Business

C: Kern County Grand Jury
Richard Frank, Foreperson
1415 Truxtun Avenue, Suite 600
Bakersfield, CA 93301

FRUITVALE SCHOOL DISTRICT

COPY



www.fruitvale.k12.ca.us

7311 Rosedale Highway
Bakersfield, CA 93308
661 589-3830 phone
661 589-3674 fax

The Honorable John Somers, Presiding Judge
Kern County Superior Court
1415 Truxton Avenue, Suite 212
Bakersfield, CA 93301

Judge Somers:

The Fruitvale School District appreciates the Grand Jury's inquire into the quality of the lunch program served to junior high students and agrees with the Findings of the report.

In regards to the recommendations of the report, the Fruitvale School District's responses are detailed below:

- 1) Implement the "share table" concept – the recommendation requires further analysis due to the concerns regarding space available for seating and the scheduling and workload this would place on cafeteria and custodial staff. Action taken will depend on observations and a trial period beginning with the 2016-17 school year.
- 2) Consider the possibility of "Theme Bars" – this recommendation will not be implemented due to the Cafeteria Fund's inability to incur the added cost for additional staffing for Theme Bars. Operation for the Cafeteria program currently remains self-sufficient with no room for increased expenses.
- 3) Implement and expand salad/fruit bars - this recommendation has been implemented in the 2015-16 school year. While an actual salad "bar" is not offered, salad bar options are offered to students through the food line which previously did not exist.
- 4) Examine sound levels in the cafeteria to determine any methods for improving the acoustics – this recommendation will not be implemented as the District does not believe this is warranted or reasonable. This concern has never been brought to the attention of District leadership, and to explore acoustical improvements would be a significant expense on budgets that are already strained. If and when the District looks to modernize needed facilities in the future, this item will be evaluated.
- 5) Create a questionnaire or add suggestion box for students to express their opinion of the food service program – this recommendation has been implemented through the District's Local Control and Accountability Plan process which surveys students (and parents). This process revealed many concerns two years ago regarding the food service program, which has since been replaced.

*Board of Trustees: Joe Dobitz . Stan Greene . Tina Stout . Richard Traynor . Andrew Bransby
Dr. Mary Westendorf, Superintendent . Dr. Matt Torres, Assistant Superintendent*

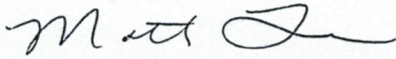
National Blue Ribbon School Awards Recipient . California Distinguished Schools Awards Recipient

The District was pleased to announce a new food provider for the 2015-16 school year that has been well received. Lunch participation has grown from 24,006 meals served in 2014-15 to over 46,518 in 2015-16.

The District is committed to providing fresh, healthy, and desirable meals while keeping within the guidelines of the National School Lunch Program. The District is thankful for the Grand Jury's report and recommendations and the report will be posted on our District's website.

If you have further questions, please feel free to contact me at 661-589-3830.

Sincerely,



Matt Torres, Ed.D
Assistant Superintendent/Chief Business Officer
Fruitvale School District

Cc: Kern County Grand Jury

*Board of Trustees: Joe Dobitz . Stan Greene . Tina Stout . Richard Traynor . Andrew Bransby
Dr. Mary Westendorf, Superintendent . Dr. Matt Torres, Assistant Superintendent*

National Blue Ribbon School Awards Recipient . California Distinguished Schools Awards Recipient

Panama-Buena Vista Union School District

KEVIN SILBERBERG, Ed.D.
District Superintendent

4200 Ashe Road
Bakersfield, Ca 93313
(661) 831-8331 FAX (661) 398-2141



BOARD OF TRUSTEES
Dean Haddock, Psy.D.
Ana Rojas
Greg White
Dolores Whitley
Keith C. Wolaridge

June 14, 2016

The Honorable John Somers
Presiding Judge
Kern County Superior Court
1415 Truxtun Avenue, Suite 212
Bakersfield, CA 93301

✓ Richard Frank
Foreman
2015-16 Kern County Grand Jury
1415 Truxtun Avenue, Suite 600
Bakersfield, CA 93301

Re: Response to Grand Jury Report Entitled "Kern County Junior High School Lunch Program"

Dear Judge Somers and Mr. Frank:

As required by and pursuant to the provisions of Penal Code 933, please see the following responses with respect to the above mentioned Grand Jury Report.

FINDINGS

F1-F14: The Panama-Buena Vista Union School District agrees that the Grand Jury's findings are substantially correct.

RECOMMENDATIONS

R1: Schools should implement the "Richland share table" concept. (Finding F3)

RESPONSE: Will not be implemented. Not reasonable, nor supported by need, sounds good but logistically and with concerns for cleanliness will not work.

R2: More schools should consider the possibility of "Theme Bars". (Finding F4)

RESPONSE: Agree

R3: More schools should implement and/or expand their salad/fruit bars. (Finding F5)

RESPONSE: Agree, all District schools sites currently utilize salad bars.

R4: Schools should examine the loud sound levels in the cafeterias to see if there are methods available to improve the acoustics. (Finding F12)

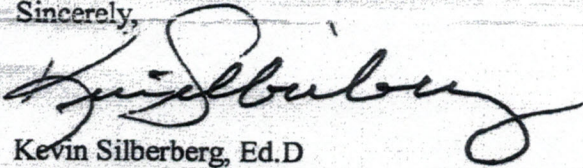
RESPONSE: Agree.

R5: Schools should create a questionnaire or add a suggestion box for the students to express their opinion of the food service program. (Finding F14)

RESPONSE: Agree

If you have any questions concerning these issues, please do not hesitate to contact my office at (661) 831-8331, ext. 6104.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "K. Silberberg", written in a cursive style.

Kevin Silberberg, Ed.D
Superintendent

BAKERSFIELD CITY SCHOOL DISTRICT



Steve McClain
Assistant Superintendent,
Business Services

EDUCATION CENTER, 1300 BAKER STREET
BAKERSFIELD, CALIFORNIA 93305-4326
(661) 631-4675
FAX: (661) 324-2497

June 24, 2016

The Honorable John Somers, Presiding Judge
Kern County Superior Court
1415 Truxtun Avenue, Suite 212

Dear Judge Somers,

Thank you for the opportunity to respond to the Final Report on the Kern County Junior High School Lunch Program released on February 3, 2016. We value the Grand Jury's interest in our school meal programs. The on-site visits by members of the Grand Jury provided a greater understanding of the National School Lunch Program (NSLP) and our district's operation of this program.

Bakersfield City School District (BCSD) is the largest elementary district in California serving over 30,000 pre-k through eighth grade students. School meals are the foundation for students to achieve academic success, and our programs touch the lives of every child daily. Some pertinent information regarding our Nutrition Services operation is provided below:

Three of BCSD schools are Healthier US School Challenge Gold Award of Distinction Winners. Our program was recognized as the national K-12 District winner by the United Fresh Produce Association in 2015 for our promotion, education, and use of fresh fruits and vegetables. The Nutrition Services Department was also awarded the 2014 Call to Action Champion award by Kern County's Call to Action panel.

Meals served during 2014-2015		
Lunches	4,186,705	Daily Average 23,260
Breakfasts	1,968,109	Daily Average 10,934
Snacks	678,744	Daily Average 3,993

District percentage of Free & Reduced Students – 86%

BCSD is a member of the Partners in Nutrition Co-op (PinCo) which is the second largest buying co-op in the state. Our program will utilize \$1,415,000 in USDA commodity products this year.

Schools have on-site preparation kitchens featuring a fresh themed salad bar at the junior high/middle schools and a fresh veggie bar at all elementary sites. Our menus promote fresh produce in our meal programs and meet all Federal, State, and local regulations. Our district employs approximately 300 adults from the community.

BCSD was awarded Fresh Fruit and Vegetable Grants for twenty-two schools that allowed us to educate and serve fresh produce to our students three days a week. These grants allow students to taste and experience a wide variety of fresh produce and encourages more consumption of the product during meal time at both school and home.

In response to the recommendation section of the report, please note the following additional information:

R1. Recommendation to add share tables. Share tables must be monitored for times and temperatures by an assigned employee. The tables must be monitored to prohibit adults from taking items as the food is intended only for students. At this time, our program doesn't have adequate funds to assign an employee to this task. Additionally, the majority of the food served by our district is not prepackaged and would not be appropriate to be placed on a share table.

R2. Recommendation to consider theme bars. BCSD was the first district in our county to implement veggie bars at all elementary schools and themed salad bars at all junior high/middle schools.

R3. Recommendation to implement/expand salad/fruit bars. This was implemented four years ago. BCSD was meeting current vegetable requirements one year ahead of the federal requirements.

R4. Recommendation to examine the sound levels in the cafeteria. This is being done at the time of construction of any new schools as well as during modernization construction projects at our existing sites.

R5. Recommendation for a student questionnaire or suggestion box. Our Nutrition Managers complete four nutrition projects during the school year with students. As part of these projects, the students do taste testing and discuss items on our menus. One school site was able to send 10 students to the PinCo Food Show where they taste tested and rated products that would be purchased for the 2016-2017 school year.

It was a pleasure to have the representatives from the Grand Jury visit our site and provide us with favorable comments during their visit. If you have any additional questions regarding our response, please feel free to contact Brenda Robinson, Director of Nutrition Services at 661-631-4733.

Sincerely,



Steve McClain
Assistant Superintendent, Business Services

cc: Foreperson, Kern County Grand Jury

MIRIAM JAMISON CHILDREN'S CENTER

PREFACE:

The 2015-2016 Kern County Grand Jury Health, Education and Social Service Committee (HESS) visited The Miriam Jamison Children's Center (Center) at 1010 Shalimar Drive, Bakersfield, CA 93306 pursuant to the California Penal Code §925 and §933 authorizing The Grand Jury to investigate and report on various departments throughout Kern County.

PURPOSE OF INQUIRY:

After reviewing previous reports, HESS visited the Center to determine if previous recommendations were implemented.

PROCESS:

HESS reviewed the previous 2013-2014 Kern County Grand Jury report pertaining to the Center. The Program Director (Director) gave us a tour of the facility. HESS viewed the 10 minute introductory video the children see upon admission, then conducted an interview with the Director. Additional research included newspaper articles and the Center's website.

FACTS:

- A. The Center is operated by Kern County Department of Human Services, 24 hours a day and 7 days a week. It is licensed for 56 beds. It is one of only 9 facilities of this type in the State of California.
- B. Vision Statement of the Center is "To provide children who need emergency shelter and protection a safe, warm and nurturing environment."
- C. The Mission Statement is "Provide the abused, neglected, and abandoned children of Kern County a temporary, safe haven where their needs can be met."
- D. The Kern County Superintendent of School provides education to the children at the Center. They currently have two teachers with instructional staff.
- E. The Center tries to place 0-5 year old children within 12 hours.
- F. Children 6 -17 are placed in foster care or returned to guardians within 30 days when possible. The average stay is five days.

- G. Those admitted up to age 17 with their infant are allowed to be housed with the baby until proper placement is located.
- H. The Center is licensed for 56 children. On the day of the visit the occupancy was 32.
- I. The following statistics for 2014 were provided by the Director:
 - 1. Children admitted ages
 - 0 – 5 701
 - 6 – 12 409
 - 13 – 17 368
 - Total admitted 1,478
 - 2. Destination of children released from the Center:
 - 15% returned home
 - 6% placed with relatives
 - 20% placed in foster homes
 - 3% placed in group homes
 - 48% to emergency foster homes
 - 8% other: Juvenile hall, hospitals

FINDINGS:

- F1. In a previous report it was noted the outdoor sign was in need of repair. At the time of the visit it was noted that the sign had been replaced.
- F2. The 10 minute introductory video shown on admission was viewed by HESS. The video was found to be very informative and not in need of updating at this time.
- F3. The furniture in the lobby and visitation rooms are heavily worn. The Director is in the process of replacing the existing furniture.
- F4. The cafeteria serves three meals and two snacks a day to the children. The Kern County Health Department inspected the food services and issued an “A” rating.
- F5. The building is protected by a new closed circuit video system and recordings are kept for a minimum of two weeks. The high quality cameras and the Digital Video Recorder were professionally installed.
- F6. The Kern County Superintendent of Schools (KCSS) oversees the two class room school. The classrooms are separate from the Center’s main building. The interiors were inviting and well equipped. KCSS maintains all student educational records.

- F7. Children are rated on a behavioral scale from 1 the lowest, to 4 the highest. On admission, all children are rated a 2. If the child has known high risk behaviors the number is adjusted according to their behavioral history. They can quickly earn a higher number with good behavior.
- F8. Paid jobs are available to children who achieve a three or four rating. The jobs allow them to earn gift cards upon their placement.
- F9. Field trips will be offered to children with a two or higher rating. These trips could include pizza parlors, bowling alleys, movie theaters, CALM and beaches.
- F10. If a child cannot be medically treated by a staff member, they are taken to Kern Medical Center. If the child needs a blood draw or other minor procedures they are taken to Sagebrush Pediatric Care Center.
- F11. Children's medications are controlled by the Registered Nurse (RN). Medications are kept in a locked cabinet. The RN dispenses the medications into individual doses. In the event she is unavailable to administer the medication a staff member gives the child the medication.
- F12. The interior walls of the hallways were covered in reinforced fiberglass plastic paneling making them easy to clean and extremely hard to damage.
- F13. They have a newly designated music room where staff and volunteers work with the children. Instruments for the program have been donated.
- F14. The outdoor playground has a canopy fully covering the play equipment.
- F15. The exterior of the building and trim is in need of repair. The exterior color coat has numerous areas where it is peeling.
- F16. The Center has experienced a reduction in the volunteer force. The current cost to become a volunteer is \$108.00 upfront, the cost of the background screening. The County will reimburse the volunteer after 6 months of service, but the upfront cost seems to be the deterrent.

COMMENTS:

The 2015-2016 Kern County Grand Jury would like to thank the Director and staff for taking the time to show us the Center and the operations. The tour was very informative and thorough. HESS was impressed with the enthusiasm of the Director and staff throughout the facility.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

- R1. Continue to pursue the replacement of the furniture that is badly worn. (F3)
- R2. The Center's exterior should be repaired as soon as funds become available. (F15)
- R3. The Center should investigate means to reduce or eliminate the required upfront fees for Center volunteers, possibly exploring grants or donations for this purpose. (F16)

NOTES:

- The Miriam Jamison Children's Center should post a copy of this report where it will be available for public review.
- Persons wishing to receive an email notification of newly released reports may sign up at: www.co.kern.kern.ca.us/grandjury.
- Present and past Kern County Grand Jury Final Reports and Responses can be accessed on the Kern County Grand Jury website: www.co.kern.ca.us/grandjury.

RESPONSE REQUIRED WITHIN 90 DAYS

**PRESIDING JUDGE
KERN COUNTY SUPERIOR COURT
1415 TRUXTUN AVENUE, SUITE 212
BAKERSFIELD, CA 93301**

**CC: FOREPERSON
KERN COUNTY GRAND JURY
1415 TRUXTUN AVENUE, SUITE 600
BAKERSFIELD, CA 93301**

Kern County Board of Supervisors
Response to Grand Jury Final Report
Miriam Jamison Children's Center

Response to Findings:

The Board of Supervisors notes that the Grand Jury's findings are substantially correct. The Department of Human Services had identified opportunities for improvement and initiated some changes to the Jamison Children's Center.

Response to Recommendation:

R1: Continue to pursue the replacement of the furniture that is badly worn.

We concur with the Grand Jury's recommendation. The Department of Human Services is working with a local company who is donating a new front lobby and two visitation room furnishings at no cost to the County.

R2: The Center's exterior should be repaired as soon as funds become available.

We concur with the Grand Jury's recommendation. The Department of Human Services is seeking approval for the repairs. A local organization proposes to provide the repairs at no cost to the County.

R3: The Center should investigate means to reduce or eliminate the required upfront fees for Center volunteers, possible exploring grants or donations for this purpose.

The upfront volunteer fee is used for the volunteer's background screening. Eliminating the fee is not cost-effective for the County. The current process is to reimburse the volunteer if six months of service is provided. This process provides a volunteer invested commitment and prudently reduces the department's costs. There are several community groups that volunteer on a regular basis and were reimbursed for their upfront cost.

REGIONAL OCCUPATIONAL CENTER KERN HIGH SCHOOL DISTRICT

“THE SCHOOL THAT CHANGES LIVES”

SUMMARY:

The Regional Occupational Center Program (ROC) is truly a lesser known entity of the Kern High School District (KHSD). No one that visits the facility could leave not being impressed. The cleanliness of the grounds would not be expected as the campus serves about 900 students each day. The curriculum is not to be believed. The courses consist of Fire Fighting, Law Enforcement, Welding, Auto Body, Diesel Mechanics, Agriculture (Ag), Medical, Child Care and Computer Classes just to mention a few.

PURPOSE OF INQUIRY:

The 2015-2016 Kern County Grand Jury (Grand Jury) Health, Education and Social Service Committee (HESS) visited ROC at 501 South Mt. Vernon Avenue, Bakersfield, California pursuant to the California Penal Code §§925 and 933 authorizing the Grand Jury to investigate and report on departments throughout Kern County. HESS had reviewed previous reports and was interested in the levels of funding and what changes have been made in recent years at the Center.

PROCESS:

The Committee interviewed the Supervising Administrator for ROC. In addition a tour of the facility on Mt. Vernon Avenue was conducted. The website was studied and literature made available to the Committee was reviewed.

BACKGROUND:

ROC is a KHSD facility where high school juniors, seniors and adults take courses designed to prepare students for entry-level employment. Students are trained so they may be able to apply and pass the certification tests in their field of study. The certification rate for some courses is as high as 90%. The overall average is about 50%. Their creed:

“We believe that preparing students with the skills required to perform entry-level functions in the work world is our primary task.”

FACTS:

- A. ROC is a program of the KHSD.
- B. The goal is to supply the necessary skills to students so they can qualify for an entry-level position upon graduation and put them on a path for postsecondary education.
- C. Most students are bussed to the ROC location for 3 hour classes, (morning or afternoon sessions), from 17 schools in KHSD.
- D. Class size averages 30 students.
- E. Some classes are taught by business leaders from the community. Years of experience in the field they are teaching makes them well qualified to help the students.
- F. KHSD's 2015 graduation rate was 79.8%, an increase of 3.4% over 2014. The program is a contributing factor in the higher rate of high school graduates.
- G. The ROC program is funded from the KHSD Budget. Their portion of that budget for 2014 was \$5,351,782.
- H. There are currently 57 employees on the staff at the ROC facility.
- I. Bus transportation budget in 2013-2014 was \$454,162.
- J. ROC has many outside business partners to help in the placement of students who achieve a certificate in their field.
- K. Outside business partners also assist in supplying materials and instruction for students.
- L. These five classes have the highest placement rates for students obtaining certificates:
 - Business, Banking & Finance
 - Nursing Assistant
 - Medical Assistant
 - Welding
 - Auto Technology
- M. Other courses offered include:
 - Ag/Diesel Mechanics
 - Law Enforcement
 - Early Childhood Education
 - Office Occupations
 - Animal Care
 - Food Science
 - Auto Body and Fender
 - Cisco Networking Academy
 - Fashion Merchandising
 - Fire Fighting
 - Retail Sales
 - Metal Fabrication

- N. Recently added new courses include:
- Mobile App Development
 - Robotics Engineering
 - 3D Animation & Video Game Design
 - Video Game Programming
 - Pharmacy Tech
 - Physical Therapy Tech/Sports
- O. Students are given instruction on completing job applications as well as writing and maintaining current resumes.
- P. Students are made aware of the importance of attendance, appearance, safety programs, written communication and need for good verbal communication.
- Q. Approximately 900 students are enrolled in the ROC programs.

FINDINGS:

- F1. The grounds of the campus were exceptionally clean. The classrooms were well organized and students appeared engaged as we toured the campus.
- F2. The teaching materials available to the instructors were exceptional. Examples of these items include:
- Diesel engines for the students to tear down and reassemble in the ag/diesel mechanics classes
 - Firefighting equipment for the classes including full suits, breathing apparatus, fire pump engine and an extensive array of firefighting tools
 - A fully equipped auto shop includes vehicle lifts, alignment rack, numerous tool boxes and brake machine
 - A body shop with 2 state of the art paint booths, a wide variety of body tools and a very enthusiastic instructor
 - Welding classes have facilities to teach anything from basic techniques to the more complex, including overhead welding
 - The computer classroom has quite an impressive array of 64 new PC computers, very organized, to make the most of the teachers' time. In addition there are numerous repair and troubleshooting stations to teach repair techniques
 - The Ag teachers have a vast array of equipment from large tractors to combines and other assorted farm implements
- F3. ROC campus has a full functioning Kern Schools Credit Union office, staffed by students from the Banking and Finance Class. They are supervised by an employee of the Credit Union.
- F4. The enrollment is only limited by space at this time. Additional programs at each high school will help relieve the load at the Mt. Vernon campus.

- F5. There are plans to open a second campus on the west side of Bakersfield in the near future.
- F6. ROC is not well known nor understood by the general public.
- F7. The non-high school population is less than 10% and there is a waiting list.
- F8. The administrators of the ROC program are looking at new courses to help train the students.
- F9. Many of the programs allow the public to bring in projects for the students to work on and allow the student to get on the job training. Some examples are:
- Auto Technology students do actual brake jobs, front end work, suspension service and other minor repairs
 - Animal Care students bathe and groom small animals for no charge to gain experience in the field
 - Welding students build items for non-profits and county groups. One example observed was the class building skateboard racks for a high school.

COMMENTS:

The Committee would like to thank the Supervising Administrator of ROC, the instructors and staff for the enlightening tour of a facility that can truly change the lives of high school students.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

- R1. Explore additional avenues to bring more awareness to the general public about what the program offers and how it benefits students. (Finding F6)
- R2. Look into possibly adding night classes to help more working adults enroll. (Finding F4)
- R3. Continue to pursue the expansion of an additional campus to increase enrollment. (Finding F5)
- R4. As the needs of the ever-changing business community change and grow, keep looking at new programs. (Finding F8)

NOTES:

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KERN HIGH SCHOOL DISTRICT

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March 28, 2016

Presiding Judge
Kern County Superior Court
1415 Truxtun Avenue, Suite 212
Bakersfield, California 93301

Re: 2015 – 2016 Grand Jury Report – Regional Occupation Center

To the Honorable Presiding Judge:

Thank you for providing the Kern High School District (“District” or “KHSD”) with the findings and recommendations of the Kern County Grand Jury regarding the Regional Occupational Center (“ROC”). The KHSD appreciates the time and effort that the Grand Jury took in order to review, evaluate, and understand the programs and services offered to students in Kern County through the ROC.

The District appreciates each of the Grand Jury’s findings (F1 – F9) and thanks you for the same. With respect to the Grand Jury’s recommendations (R1 – R4), please consider the following as the District responses:

R1. Explore additional avenues to bring more awareness to the general public about what the program offers and how it benefits students. (Finding F6)

The leadership of the District believes that every student can succeed if given access to a wide variety of learning opportunities. The mission of the KHSD is to provide the necessary programs and services to allow all students to graduate from high school prepared to succeed in the workplace and at the secondary level. To increase student awareness of the many programs offered at the ROC, information is distributed via printed material, all school site counselors are updated annually about the program options at the ROC, and regular presentations to students and staff at KHSD school sites are given in the spring. School sites also have the opportunity to schedule field trips to the ROC for students to meet the teachers and students who are currently enrolled in the programs. Further, the ROC website is updated regularly with program information.

To further improve the general public's awareness of the career and technical education ("CTE") programs available to students, KHSD representatives have participated in numerous presentations, discussion forums, and planning sessions. Over the past several months, meetings with industry, education, and community partners have identified several strategies that can be deployed to increase student and general public awareness of available CTE courses at the ROC. Some of these strategies include: (1) further improving the ROC website by adding informational videos about each program; (2) updating printed materials (including posters) at school sites; (3) offering CTE summer camps for incoming eighth-grade students to experience various ROC programs; (4) inviting the local media to showcase individual programs and students; (5) preparing public information videos to be broadcast in movie theatres prior to feature presentations; and (6) creating more opportunities for the public to visit and tour the ROC campus and learn about the programs and facilities.

R2. Look into possibly adding night classes to help more working adults enroll. (Finding F4)

The Kern High School District has a long history of serving adult students through programs offered at the Bakersfield Adult School/Regional Occupational Center, South Mount Vernon campus. For decades, the District has offered CTE courses during the regular school day and during the evening hours. Currently, the following courses are offered during the evening hours to accommodate working adults:

- Accounting I, II, & III
- Basic Business Skills
- Filing
- Job Readiness/Skills for Success
- Keyboarding I & II
- Machine Calculation
- Record Keeping I & II
- Microsoft Office 2010 Suite
- Medical Billing and Coding
- Medical Terminology (prerequisite for Certified Nursing Assistant program)
- Anatomy & Physiology (prerequisite for Certified Nursing Assistant program)
- Woodshop (beginning level)

In addition to the current classes being offered, evening courses for adults have also been offered previously for Welding and Auto Body/Fender Repair.

The KHSD is committed to finding more ways to offer additional CTE courses for high school and adult-aged students.

R3. Continue to pursue the expansion of an additional campus to increase enrollment. (Finding F5)

For the past 15 months, the KHSD has explored the possibility of expanding CTE courses, programs, and facilities to serve even more students. On October 5, 2015, the KHSD Board of Trustees discussed the possibility of opening an additional ROC site within the metropolitan area of Bakersfield and authorized the purchase of nearly 26 acres of land in the southwest. When the existing ROC was opened in 1985, it served approximately 800 students from seven school sites in the metropolitan area. At that time the total KHSD enrollment was approximately 17,000 students. Currently, the KHSD serves over 37,000 students from 15 metropolitan school sites with the ROC serving 900 students annually.

During a study session on October 16, 2015, the KHSD Board of Trustees discussed conceptual plans for a new ROC site located in southwest Bakersfield. The desired capacity of the new ROC in the southwest is 1,200 students during the school day and nearly 300 adults during the evening hours.

On December 21, 2015, the KHSD Board of Trustees awarded the architectural contract for the new southwest ROC to a local firm. For the past few months, KHSD staff members have worked with industry and community partners, teachers, and other school districts around the country to design the southwest facility that is scheduled to open for student enrollment in August 2019.

Additionally, on February 1, 2016, the KHSD Board of Trustees awarded the architectural contract for the new programs/facilities design at the ROC on South Mount Vernon Avenue to a firm located in Clovis, CA. The new facilities at the ROC are scheduled to open in August 2018 and will increase the enrollment opportunities by an additional 300 students.

R4. As the needs of the ever-changing business community change and grow, keep looking at new programs. (Finding F8)

Through strong, collaborative partnerships with local businesses, community organizations, and other educational institutions, the KHSD is committed to providing high-quality CTE programs for students. Maintaining its focus on job-readiness skills and meaningful career pathway options for students is paramount to delivering effective CTE experiences for all students. Through its strong relationships with the Kern Economic Development Corporation, the Greater Bakersfield Chamber of Commerce, the Kern Community College District, and California State University, Bakersfield (just to name a few) the KHSD is committed to offering courses and programs that meet local employment needs while also preparing students to continue their education beyond high school.

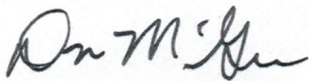
Recognizing that industry needs constantly change, the KHSD will continue to examine market indicators and local employment needs as it develops, modifies, or changes programs at all of its CTE training centers. Through the examination of local employer needs, availability of educational programs in our community, and 22,000 student responses to a District survey of

interest in CTE programs, the KHSD is exploring the expansion of programs which may include:

- Robotics Engineering & Computer Science (August, 2016)
- Mobile Application Development & Entrepreneurship (August, 2016)
- Physical Therapy & Sports Medicine (August, 2016)
- Pharmacy Technician (August, 2016)
- 3D Animation & Video Game Design (August, 2016)
- Video Game Programming (August, 2016)
- Forensic Science (August, 2017)
- Industrial Automation (August, 2017)
- Construction (August, 2018)
- Cosmetology (August, 2018)
- Culinary Arts (August, 2018)
- X-Ray Lab Technician (August, 2019)
- Digital Video Production (August, 2019)
- Dental Assistant (August, 2019)

The Kern High School District sincerely thanks the Grand Jury's Health, Education and Social Services Committee for taking the time to visit and learn about the ROC, and for providing its insights and recommendations. The District is excited about the upcoming opportunities that our ROC and CTE programs will provide for our local high school and adult learners, as well as the positive impact that such education will have on our local businesses and economy. Again, we appreciate your interest in the ROC and we look forward to future visits.

Sincerely,



Dean McGee, Ed.D.
Assistant Superintendent
Educational Services and Innovative Programs

cc: ✓Foreperson - Kern County Grand Jury
1415 Truxtun Avenue, Suite 600
Bakersfield, California 93301

Board of Trustees, Kern High School District