

David W. Gordon
Superintendent

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August 15, 2019

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Honorable David De Alba, Presiding Judge
Sacramento County Superior Court
720 9th Street, Department 47
Sacramento, CA 95814

Dear Judge De Alba:

The Sacramento County Office of Education (SCOE) and the thirteen districts that serve students and families in Sacramento County appreciate the thorough investigation and final report entitled "Recreational Marijuana: Growing Health Crisis for Sacramento County Youth?" (June 28, 2019). The Sacramento County Grand Jury has clearly taken the time to understand the concerns regarding youth marijuana use, especially after the passage of Proposition 64.

SCOE and each of the Sacramento County districts have carefully reviewed the final report from the Grand Jury and collaborated to submit this joint response to the County of Sacramento Grand Jury.

Findings

F1. Legalization, increased availability, and easy access have led to misconceptions regarding marijuana use, particularly with youth. – **We agree with this finding.**

F2. There are significant toxicity and health concerns for youth that can lead to diminished academic performance, regressed socialization, and numerous physical and health issues. – **We agree with this finding.**

F3. Although many prevention programs and partnerships have been developed to date, additional needs for youth services continue to be identified. – **We agree with this finding.**

F4. Although there are some data from the California Healthy Kids Survey (CHKS), consolidated data from multiple sources would paint a broader picture and help identify focus areas and funding needs for youth services. – **We agree with this finding.**



F5. While Sacramento County has been admirably proactive in obtaining grant funding for youth prevention, additional funding would allow for more community-based programs and for more direct support to youth in the County's middle and high schools. – **We agree with this finding.**

F6. Since results from the CHKS are used for requesting funds and developing prevention programs, improved participation by school districts would benefit county youth and their families. – **We partially agree with this finding. While 100% participation in CHKS would be ideal in terms of gathering feedback regarding marijuana and other drug use, California Education Code provides flexibility through the Local Control Funding Formula (LCFF) for districts to select surveys that best fit the context for their community. Surveys provide much more information than just feedback about marijuana and other drug use – under state law, districts have flexibility in the tools they use.**

F7. To increase awareness, provide a consistent message, and reach a larger audience, schools and other community organizations that serve youth would benefit from presentation materials related to marijuana. – **We agree with this finding.**

F8. Since each school district in the County runs its own programs related to alcohol and other drugs, there is significant variation in the resources available to students and their families throughout Sacramento County. – **We partially agree with this finding. This is a function of districts receiving dramatically different levels of resources from the state. To the extent possible from grant funding, districts are provided significant support, resources, and tools that are provided by the Sacramento County Department of Health Services, SCOE, California Department of Education, and many others that help create consistency, alignment, and coherence across our County system.**

Recommendations

R1. The Sacramento County Department of Health Services (SCDHS) and the SCOE should maintain current youth prevention programs as well as spearhead new initiatives for county youth and their families. (F1, F2, F3)

The recommendation has been implemented. Funding has been identified for SCOE to continue the important work that has been identified in this report in the 2019-2020 school year. Additional prevention programs have been identified for 2019-2020 including the scaling of Alcohol and Substance Use Prevention (ASAP) with targeted youth marijuana prevention campaigns, Marijuana Summit, and a Youth Summit to happen in 2020 with "ASAP 2.0". Three additional schools have been added for Friday Night Live/Club Live (59 total), and an additional Friday Night Live Mentoring program has been added for 2019-2020. Additional resources have been provided by the SCDHS to grow and expand the work of the Sacramento County Coalition for Youth (SCCY).

R2. SCDHS and SCOE should continue their highly successful collaborations with partners such as the SCCY and the Coalition for a Safe and Healthy Arden Arcade (CSHAA). Over the next budget cycle, SCDHS and SCOE should proactively expand partnerships with entities such as school districts, parent-teacher associations, city governments, public health officials, Child Protective Services, and law enforcement. (F1, F2, F3)

The recommendation has been implemented. The SCCY is the vehicle to expand partnerships, such as the ones listed in this recommendation. SCDHS has identified funding that is included in the 2019-2020 contract with SCOE to further expand the reach and influence of the SCCY and implement the goal of the “Future Forward Campaign”:

“The goal is to educate the Sacramento Community, offer information and resources, and provide an opportunity to get involved in creating change to protect young people from increased accessibility to marijuana in our community.”

With all of this said, funding is not guaranteed and is often year-to-year in nature – SCOE and the districts cannot guarantee ongoing work.

R3. SCDHS, SCOE, and their partners should collect and measure trend data from multiple sources, using whatever means are possible. Possible data include youth usage, treatment data, suspensions, expulsions, arrests, DUIs, and ER visits. (F4)

The recommendation has been implemented. SCOE and the districts currently collect and analyze trend data from multiple sources (when available.) For example, suspension/expulsion and chronic absenteeism is available through the California School Dashboard. The Dashboard is a powerful online tool to help districts and schools identify strengths and weaknesses and pinpoint student groups that may be struggling. The Dashboard reports performance and progress on both state and local measures. Other data listed in this recommendation, such as treatment data, are often protected through the Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act (HIPAA) and are not available to local education agencies. SCOE and the districts will continue to look for data sharing agreements with partner agencies that benefit our youth and families.

R4. Over the next budget cycle, SCDHS, SCOE, and the school districts should vigorously pursue sustainable funding for education and prevention programs for youth and their families from multiple sources such as: Prop 64, Federal and State Grants, and private organizations. (F5)

The recommendation has been implemented. SCOE and the districts are constantly looking for sustainable funding to sustain and expand our alcohol and other drug prevention and early intervention efforts. For example, in June 2019, an award/contract of \$750,000 from the California Department of Health Care Services was approved to scale the 2018-2019 “ASAP” with “ASAP 2.0” in 2019-2020. ASAP 2.0 is a partnership with SCDHS, SCOE, and community based organizations to scale our “Future Forward” marijuana prevention campaign. Another example includes SCOE and the districts leveraging Tobacco Use Prevention Education (TUPE) funds for tobacco and vaping education, prevention, and early intervention.

As stated in R2, most funding for this work is year-to-year and not guaranteed.

R5. With support from SCOE, school districts should take measures to improve participation in the CHKS during the next funding cycle, with a focus on middle, high, and non-traditional schools. The survey should include the “alcohol and other drugs” module. (F6)

The recommendation cannot be implemented because it is not consistent with state law. While SCOE and the districts are not disputing the value of CHKS, including the “Alcohol and Other Drugs” module, SCOE cannot compel participation in the use of this, or any other survey. As stated in F6, California Education Code provides flexibility through the Local Control Funding Formula (LCFF) for districts to select surveys that best fit the context for their community. Surveys provide much more information than just feedback about marijuana and other drug use – districts need flexibility in the tools they use.

R6. In partnership with service providers and others, SCOE should continually update and expand upon “ready-to-go” informational packages and effective campaigns specific to marijuana that can be shared with school districts or other community-based organizations that serve youth. (F7, F8)

Components of this recommendation have been implemented. SCOE and the districts realize that research concerning the impact of youth marijuana usage is ongoing. As the information emerges regarding “marijuana and the developing brain” we will need to update our resources and tools to reflect the latest research. One example of SCOE’s expansion of resources for districts includes a marijuana prevention curriculum that is currently being piloted in multiple youth provider settings. SCOE and the districts will continue to look for opportunities to develop tools and resources for our districts and community-based organizations.

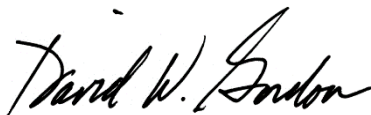
R7. School districts should create online resources for teachers, youth, and their families. (F8)

The recommendation has been implemented. While collaborating to create this joint response, SCOE and the districts created a plan for all 13 districts to create a link to the SCCY website. SCOE will be responsible for keeping the website current with online resources for teachers, youth, and their families. Not only will this allow the districts to stay up-to-date with the latest information and resources, but will also provide additional exposure for the SCCY. Additionally, representatives from school districts across Sacramento County have created the Family Engagement Forum. The goal of the forum is to engage families so they can actively support their student’s learning and development in meaningful ways. Each week, videos selected by the local districts containing vital information for families will air on Sacramento Educational Cable Consortium (SECC) Channel 15. Districts will share the SCCY youth marijuana prevention videos during their designated programming blocks on the SECC channels and will also share the YouTube link on their district websites.

R8. School districts should establish Youth Program Specialists or similar positions to administer programs related to alcohol and drug prevention in the next budget cycle. (F8) **The recommendation will not be implemented. State funding for districts varies greatly and not all districts can afford staff dedicated to these purposes. Similarly, while many districts are able to employ social workers or counselors to work on a range of issues including alcohol and drug prevention, these positions are often grant funded without any guarantee of ongoing funding. While SCOE and the districts all agree that marijuana use among teens is an urgent concern, they cannot guarantee the establishment of positions to administer these programs.**

Once again, SCOE and Sacramento County's thirteen districts appreciate the time and attention the Sacramento County Grand Jury has paid to the issue of marijuana use among youth in our county. While much has been done to support marijuana education, prevention, and early intervention, there are always steps we can take to improve and expand our services. As communicated in the Findings and Recommendations above, SCOE and the districts stand at the ready to continually look for ways to support our students and families in their health, safety, and well-being – especially as we work to reduce, and ultimately eliminate, marijuana and other drug use for youth in Sacramento County.

Sincerely,



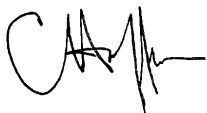
David W. Gordon
Sacramento County Superintendent of Schools



Troy Miller, Superintendent
Arcohe Union School District



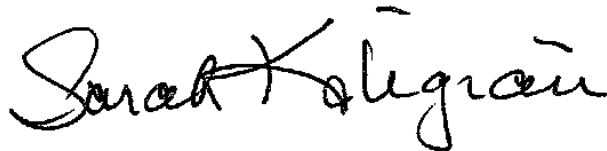
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Chris Hoffman, Superintendent
Elk Grove Unified School District



Dr. Michael Borggaard, Superintendent
Elverta Joint Elementary School District



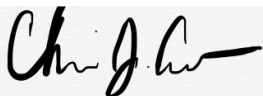
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Katherine Wright, Superintendent
River Delta Unified School District



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Jorge Aguilar, Superintendent
Sacramento City Unified School District

Honorable David De Alba, Presiding Judge
August 15, 2019
Page 7



Kent Kern, Superintendent
San Juan Unified School District



Dr. Steve Martinez, Superintendent
Twin Rivers Unified School District

DWG/BM/cjm

Email: Becky Castaneda, Grand Jury Coordinator