



# Santa Ana Unified School District

Jane A. Russo, Superintendent

August 1, 2008

2/6/08 Rec'd via email

Nancy Wieben Stock  
Presiding Judge of the Superior Court  
700 Civic Center Drive West  
Santa Ana, Ca 92701

Dear Judge Wieben Stock:

Re: Orange County Grand Jury Report- *Are Charter Schools Getting Passing Grades?*

We have reviewed the submitted copy of the 2007-2008 Orange County Grand Jury Report entitled *Are Charter Schools Getting Passing Grades?*. In accordance with California Penal Code Sections 933 and 933.05, each finding is to be responded to by the governmental entity to which it is addressed. Our responses to the findings are as follows:

## FINDINGS

- **F-1:** Orange County charter schools meet the intent of the Education Code Section 47600-47664 by providing parents and pupils a choice in educational opportunities, emphasizing specific learning experiences, and aiding at-risk or academically low-achieving students.

*Based on the information presented in the report, the Santa Ana Unified School District agrees that Orange County charter schools meet the intent of the Education Code Section 47600-47664 by providing Santa Ana Unified School District parents and students a choice in educational opportunities, emphasizing specific learning experiences, and in some instances, aiding at-risk or academically low-achieving students.*

- **F-2:** The number of charter schools in Orange County is not growing commensurate with the overall growth of charter schools in California.

*Based on the information presented in the report, the number of charter schools in Orange County is not growing commensurate with the overall growth of charter schools in California. However, it is important to note that the Santa Ana Unified School District is currently home to and providing oversight for five of the eleven charter schools established in Orange County pursuant to the 1992 legislation to facilitate the formation of charter schools.*

- **F-3:** The Orange County school districts' oversight costs, in some districts, exceed the authorized 1% reimbursement.

*The Santa Ana Unified School District is committed to providing their students with exemplary and effective educational programming and options. Consequently, this commitment has sometimes resulted in increased oversight costs incurred while actively monitoring the charter schools under its jurisdiction. Some examples of oversight responsibility that may generate increased oversight costs include the review of charter renewal petitions and the processing of facilities requests.*

*Future legislation should take this into account and provide the reimbursement to the charter authorizer of oversight expenses by the state and/or the individual charter school that exceed oversight fees collected from individual charter schools for specific oversight responsibilities.*

## **RECOMMENDATIONS**

- **R-1: Orange County school districts and Orange County Superintendent of Schools continue to offer expanded choices for educational opportunities, as required in the State Education Code, by utilizing charter schools as an option to provide additional choices, especially for at-risk and academically low-achieving students.**

*The Santa Ana Unified School District will continue to support the utilization of high quality charter schools as a viable educational option for its students.*

- **R-2: The chartering authorities should follow the intent of the legislature by encouraging the establishment of charter schools by granting more charter school petitions provided they meet State requirements.**

*In accordance with the letter and spirit of the law, the Santa Ana Unified School District will continue to abide by the intent of the legislature and will continue to thoroughly review all charter school petitions submitted.*

- **R-3: Local school districts provide adequate oversight of charter schools even though State law does not allow for full reimbursement for such oversight.**

*Although the costs incurred for charter school oversight are not fully reimbursed, the Santa Ana Unified School District shall continue to provide adequate oversight of charter schools under its jurisdiction as mandated by law.*

*Future legislation should take this into account and provide the reimbursement to the charter authorizer of oversight expenses by the state and/or the individual charter school that exceed oversight fees collected from individual charter schools for specific oversight responsibilities.*

Sincerely,



Jane A. Russo  
Superintendent

cc: Orange County Grand Jury  
700 Civic Center Drive West  
Santa Ana, CA 92701

1601 East Chestnut Avenue, Santa Ana, CA 92701-6322, (714) 558-5501

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