



## ***NEWPORT-MESA Unified School District***

**2985A Bear Street • Costa Mesa • California 92626 • (714) 424-5000**

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**Mailing Address: P.O. Box 1368  
Newport Beach, CA 92663-0368**

September 1, 2004

Frederick P. Horn  
Presiding Judge of the Superior Court  
700 Civic Center Drive West  
Santa Ana, Ca 92701

Dear Judge Horn:

Enclosed is Newport-Mesa Unified School District's response to the findings and recommendations of the 2003/04 Grand Jury Report, "Combating Truancy In Orange County."

Respectfully,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Robert J. Barbot", written in a cursive style.

Robert J. Barbot, Ed.D.  
Superintendent

cc: Orange County Grand Jury  
Enclosure

**Response to Findings and Recommendations**

2003-2004 Orange County Grand Jury Report

“Combating Truancy in Orange County”

August 4, 2004

Newport-Mesa Unified School District  
Robert Barbot, Ed. D., Superintendent  
2985 Bear Street, A  
Costa Mesa, CA 92626

### Finding #1

The Web sites of the following school districts provide an inadequate treatment of attendance matters and lack explicit expectations for students' attendance.

### Recommendation #1

Each of the following school districts improve their respective Web sites with an enhanced treatment of attendance matters.

### Response

As a result of this finding, the N-MUSD website has added the following text:

*Regular, punctual, and full-day attendance is an important prerequisite for a student to make reasonable academic progress. State law mandates daily attendance at school until the age of eighteen and places the primary responsibility for student attendance with the parent or guardian. No pupil is permitted to leave school at any time before the regular hour of closing without the approval of the school principal or designee. Students must have an approved off-campus permit on file to leave the school grounds during the lunch period.*

*For further details regarding student attendance, you may access the following link for the Newport-Mesa Unified School District's Board Policy/Rule and Regulation 4130: Student Attendance and Release from School.*

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### Finding #8

In 2002-03, only 10 of the 27 school districts were represented on the County (Department of Education) SAR Board. In 2003-04, that number has increased by one to 11. Membership on the County SAR Board is open to all County school districts, and all school districts, – even those without SAR Boards, – would benefit by their participation.

### Recommendation #8

The Orange County Superintendent of Schools/Department of Education strongly encourage each of the school districts in Orange County... to appoint a representative to the County SAR Board and to participate more fully in County SAR Board activities.

### Response

The Newport-Mesa Unified School District will send a representative to the Orange County SAR Board meetings for school year 2004-05.

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Finding #15

School districts that limit or curtail their participation on the County SAR Board because of budgetary constraints may not be aware of the opportunity for reimbursement, through State or Federal funding, afforded by *Education Code* §48323.

Recommendation #14

All Orange County school districts become aware of the opportunity for reimbursement through State or federal funding, afforded by *California Education Code* §48323, for participating on the County SAR Board.

Response

Newport-Mesa Unified School District will continue requesting reimbursement for mandated costs for attendance at County SAR Board meetings through the State Department of Education.

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Finding #19

Periodic training of school administrators in preparing SARB-referral documentation packages would be beneficial.

Recommendation #18

The District Attorney provides for the periodic training of school administrators in preparing SARB-referral documentation packages.

Response

Newport-Mesa Unified School District has been using the SARB-referral documentation packets and has provided training for the past three years to the assistant principals on the appropriate use of the documentation. Guidelines are updated yearly and added to the Student Services manual issued to each administrator.

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Conclusion

The Newport-Mesa Unified School District appreciates the Orange County Grand Jury's study to improve student attendance. The staff believes that the implementation of these recommendations will help students and parents understand the value of good attendance.

END