



August 22, 2023

Honorable Maria D. Hernandez
Presiding Judge of the Superior Court of California
700 Civic Center Drive West
Santa Ana, CA 92701

Subject: "The ABCs of Educating Children Experiencing Homelessness in Orange County"
Grand Jury Response

Dear Judge Hernandez,

Per your request, and in accordance with Penal Code 933, please find Project Hope Alliance's grateful response to the subject report.

Should you have any questions or request additional comments, please contact me at (949)722-7824.

For the kids,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, consisting of several overlapping loops and a long horizontal stroke extending to the left.

Jennifer Friend
Chief Executive Officer



Summary Response Statement:

On May 25, 2023, the Orange County Grand Jury released a report entitled “The ABC’s of Educating Children Experiencing Homelessness in Orange County”. This report requested responses to findings and recommendations to Project Hope Alliance. The responses are below:

Findings and Responses:

F11. A lack of reliable transportation for children experiencing homelessness often results in chronic tardiness and absenteeism.

Response: Agree.

F16. A significant lack of affordable permanent housing contributes to many families being caught in the cycle of homelessness.

Response: Agree.

Recommendations and Responses:

R6. By October 1, 2023, a joint task force should be formed by the OCDE comprised of a district-level administrator from each Orange County school district and leadership from non-profit organizations who serve homeless families, to address absenteeism, low test scores and low graduation rates of children experiencing homelessness.

Response: The recommendation has not yet been implemented.

Though it is the understanding of Project Hope Alliance that the Orange County Department of Education intends to form a joint task force, to date this has not occurred. Project Hope Alliance is actively advocating (as well as other community leaders on its behalf) to be placed on the joint task force as leadership representation of an organization who serves families and children experiencing homelessness. This is based upon Project Hope Alliance’s expertise in the service and education of K-12 students experiencing homelessness and highly successful partnerships with multiple school districts and cities throughout Orange County resulting in significant reductions in tardies, absenteeism, and a 93% graduation rate amongst traditional high school students enrolled in our program.