

Grand Jury Report 2008-09

Response from

Scotts Valley Unified School District

Scotts Valley Unified School District Board of Trustees

Scotts Valley High School



What is the Grand Jury?

Two kinds of Grand Jury:

- Criminal Grand Jury (issues indictments)
- Civil Grand Jury
 - To randomly audit local governmental agencies and officials
 - To investigate citizens' complaints
 - To publish its investigative findings and recommendations



What is the Grand Jury?

- Group of Santa Cruz County residents (19) working together for one year (this Jury for two years)
- Purpose to “assist public agencies and our city and county governments to operate more efficiently and...economically”
- Has authority only to “bring issues to the attention of the citizens and the media”
- Each agency investigated required by law to respond to report findings and recommendations if requested by the Jury



Why Scotts Valley Unified?

- “Citizens may submit complaints directly to the Grand Jury requesting that it investigate what they perceive as wrongdoing by a public agency....The jury determines which of the complaints it receives to examine, considering the type of complaint and weighing the resources needed to conduct the investigation.”

From “Introduction” to *Grand Jury Report*



Why Scotts Valley Unified?

- “To determine which district to study, student wellness statistics for all K-12 school districts in Santa Cruz County were analyzed. As a result, SVUSD was selected as the subject of the investigation.”

From “Summary” of *Grand Jury Report* component “Alcohol, A Drug of Choice for Scotts Valley Teens”



Why Scotts Valley Unified?

“The selection of a K-12 unified school district that was small to medium in size was ideal for determining the impact and effects of a student wellness program from elementary through high school. The study also needed to focus on a district that had a significant number of students using alcohol as reported by statistics.”

From “Background” in “Alcohol, A Drug of Choice for Scotts Valley Teens”



In the beginning....

- ✦ Letter October 23, 2008, “conducting a study of student wellness in SVUSD”
- ✦ Requested documents
 - Board Policies, Administrative Regulations
 - Categorical Programs (e.g., TUPE, SDFSC)
 - Test data:
 - ✦ CA Physical Fitness Tests
 - ✦ CA Healthy Kids Survey

(continued)



In the beginning (cont.)

- Student Wellness Committee records
- Summary of “district programs and practices that address student needs and promote student wellness”
- Verification of federal, state, district funding to implement student wellness programs and/or activities



Interviews

Superintendent, Nov. 5

- Request for additional information Nov. 20 focused on drug and alcohol use (info on evaluation of programs, means of communication, involvement of communities and other agencies, suspensions/expulsions)
- Supt. interviews with principals, district administrators

Site Interviews by Grand Jury Members

- Site administrators, counselors, teachers



Grand Jury Report 2008-2009

- Background
- Scope of the Project
- Findings (27 items, 13 requiring responses)
- Conclusions (12 items)
- Recommendation (12 items, 12 requiring responses)
- Commendations (3 items)



Major Findings: #1

- ✦ Administration does not take CHKS data seriously, does not understand comparative implications, and does not share data with staff.
- ✦ Response:
 - Data are analyzed as one of multiple measures
 - Data are shared with staff and public, and included in discussions of sites' safety plans and Single Plans for Student Achievement



Major Findings: #2

- ✦ The Student Wellness Policy BP5030 focuses primarily on nutrition and physical activity; alcohol and drug intervention and prevention are not mentioned in the policy.
- ✦ Response: BP5131.6 and AR clearly define the district's policies on alcohol and drug intervention and prevention



Major Findings: #3

- The district has not coordinated the development of a comprehensive plan for prevention/intervention as defined in policy.
- Response: Too Good for Drugs is curricular base, supplemented by counseling, assemblies, school rules, appropriate consequences, community partnerships



Major Findings: #4

- District uses suspension and expulsion as a primary intervention for student alcohol use.
- Response: District, with support of Scotts Valley Rotary, provides counseling services, with suspension and expulsion as required by Education Code.



Education Code 48915, 48900

48915: Principal or Superintendent SHALL recommend expulsion:

- (a) Unlawful possession of any controlled substance, except for the first offense for the possession of not more than one ounce of marijuana

48900: Grounds for suspension or expulsion:

- (b) Unlawfully possessed, used, sold or otherwise furnished or been under the influence of a controlled substance (alcoholic beverage or an intoxicant of any kind)
- (d) Unlawfully offered, arranged or negotiated to sell a controlled substance



Major Findings: #4

- District uses suspension and expulsion as a primary intervention for student alcohol use.
- Response: District, with support of Scotts Valley Rotary, provides counseling services.
- Response: District's suspension and expulsion rates are the lowest for any district with high schools in the county.

Suspension/Expulsion Rates

SVUSD as a percentage of the County	Enrollment	Violence/Drug		Total	
		Expulsion	Suspension	Expulsion	Suspension
2007-08	6.9%	6.7%	.8%	5.6%	0.4%
2006-07	7.1%	.9%	1.0%	0.6%	0.8%
2005-06	7.3%	4.4%	0.5%	3.0%	0.6%
2004-05	7.4%	.5%	0.1%	0.3%	0.4%
Four Year Average	7.2%	3.1%	0.6%	2.3%	0.5%



Major Findings: #5

- High school administrators and staff are unfamiliar with programs and services within the county to support prevention/intervention
- Response: Partially agree. The high school is familiar with some, and use them: DUI sentencing hearings, Town Hall Meetings, Friday Night Live, assemblies supported by other agencies; will investigate further



Major Findings: #6

- District should fund an SRO at the high school.
- Response: The police department has not had sufficient staff to provide an SRO.
- Response: Scotts Valley Police are readily accessible, provide DARE, teach an ROP class, support Red Ribbon Week and other activities



Major Findings: #7

- SVUSD officials should “launch a united effort aimed at reducing the life threatening behaviors associated with teen drinking.”
- Response: A united effort is required by the entire community to solve this community problem.



Commendations

- Scotts Valley Police Department provides consistent community leadership in prevention and intervention awareness programs.
- County Health Services Agency Alcohol and Drug Program works with agencies and districts to decrease use of alcohol by teens.
- Elementary and middle school have effective strategies and programs to assist students.

SVUSD Healthy Kids Survey Data

	9 th Grade 2007		9 th Grade 2009		11 th Grade 2007		11 th Grade 2009	
	SVHS	Nation	SVHS	Nation	SVHS	Nation	SVHS	Nation
Ever drink alcohol?	36%	67%	45%	67%	65%	76%	56%	79%
Drink alcohol in past 30 days?	22%	36%	25%	37%	38%	46%	36%	53%
Ever been drunk?	22%	-	29%	-	50%	-	37%	-
Ever drunk/high at school?	13%	-	17%	-	22%	-	24%	-
Believe frequent use of alcohol is harmful?	95%	-	90%	-	91%	-	97%	-



WestEd's *Technical Report* of the CHKS data

“It is important to interpret these results with caution. Results can be significantly impacted by response rates, the type of parental consent used (passive or active), gender differences, regional variations and other issues.... The CHKS is only one of many data sources.”

The full Grand Jury Report
can be found at their web site:

<http://www.co.santa-cruz.ca.us/grandjury/>

District responses are due Oct. 1, 2009