

# Mare Island Elementary School

## 2002-2003 Grand Jury Report

### I. Reason for Investigation

Each year the Grand Jury visits a random selection of schools in the county.

### II. Procedure

The Grand Jury:

- Toured the school facility
- Talked with administrators, teachers, classified personnel, students and parents
- Got a feel of the general tenor of the school
- Observed students in classes, passing class-to-class, and on the playground
- Visited the library, computer lab, gymnasium, cafeteria and classrooms
- Reviewed health, safety and emergency evacuation procedures.

### III. Background

Mare Island Elementary School was built by the Navy and opened in 1988. It was in April 1996 that Mare Island Naval Shipyard closed. However, Mare Island Elementary School survived and is still open today and is part of the Vallejo Unified School District. The school enrollment is just shy of 500. There is a teaching staff of 25 and a classified staff of 13. Ninety Five percent of the students are bused across the causeway from Vallejo to the school. Breakfast and lunch are transported by van. Despite this and even though many of the students are of low social economic status, Mare Island Elementary provides an excellent education for its students. It has received API awards.

There is little parent participation largely because City of Vallejo does not provide city bus transportation across the causeway to the school. Consequently, many of the parents, particularly those on welfare etc., have no way to get to the school. The school staff has attempted to overcome this by providing transportation and holding spaghetti feed nights, Grandparents' Days, Mother's Days and Father's Days. This has met with success.

The Vallejo Unified School District established Mare Island Elementary School based on overflow from other elementary schools in the district. This creates problems for the administration and teachers in developing cohesiveness, identity and loyalty to Mare Island on the part of both students and parents.

### IV. Findings and Recommendations

*Each finding is referenced to the background paragraph number*

**Finding #1** - The Vallejo Unified School District has chose to establish the school population at Mare Island Elementary based on overflow from other elementary schools in the District. The assumption being that students will eventually return to their home school. This creates a problem for the administration and teachers in developing a cohesiveness, identity and loyalty to Mare Island Elementary on the part of both students and parents.

**Recommendation #1** - Vallejo Unified School District needs to re-examine the way it establishes its school population at Mare Island Elementary by restructuring school boundary lines.

**Finding #2** - There is a great need for city bus transportation to Mare Island.

**Recommendation #2** - The City of Vallejo (City Council) needs to explore funding sources that would allow regularly scheduled city bus transportation to Mare Island.

**Affected Agencies**

- Solano County Office of Education
  - Vallejo Unified School District
  - Mare Island Elementary School
  - City of Vallejo City Council
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