



SOLANO COUNTY GRAND JURY
2013-2014

**SECURITY IMPACT ON GRADUATION RATES
IN SOLANO COUNTY HIGH SCHOOLS**

Security Impact on Graduation Rates in Solano County High Schools

2013-2014 Solano County Grand Jury

I. INTRODUCTION

The 2013-2014 Solano County Grand Jury is concerned as to whether High School students are in a safe learning environment that will aide in their ability to successfully complete their high school education. Research reveals graduation rates fluctuate per district within Solano County. Identifying the causes of fluctuation is complex but necessary to improve the graduation rates.

II. METHODOLOGY

- Interviewed Principals and Administrative staff of the following schools:
 - Benicia Unified School District:
 - Benicia High
 - Dixon Unified School District:
 - Dixon High
 - Fairfield Unified School District:
 - Angelo Rodriguez High
 - Armijo High
 - Fairfield High
 - Travis Unified School District:
 - Vanden High
 - Vacaville Unified School District:
 - Vacaville High
 - Will C. Wood High
 - Vallejo City Unified School District:
 - Jesse Bethel High
 - Vallejo High
- Additional Interviews
 - Superintendent of Vallejo City Unified School District
 - A member of the Vallejo City Unified School District Board of Education
 - Site Safety Supervisors
- Reviewed
 - California Department of Education (CDE) Data & Statistics website
 - California Department of Education 4-Year Adjusted Cohort Outcome Data Processing
 - California Department of Education Expenditures for current Expense of Education Data
 - Education Codes of the California Department of Education
 - DoSomething.org - 11 Facts About Dropping Out
 - High Schools' School Accountability Report Card (SARC) Reports
 - National Association of School Resource Officers, (NASRO) website.

- Newspaper articles
- School Crime Calls reports from respective City Police Departments
- Solano County Office of Education Annual Report
- The Mattie C. Stewart Foundation - *Facts About The High School Dropout Rate*
- Various Site Safety Standard Operating Procedures Handbooks
- Site Safety Supervisor's Job Descriptions

III. STATEMENT OF FACTS

The Grand Jury investigated the graduation rates and safety at Solano County high schools. The investigation revealed areas of concerns that may impact graduation rates.

Cohort Students, Graduates & Graduation Rates

In order to understand the information an explanation needs to be given regarding the definition of "cohort". Cohort is defined, in statistics and demographics, as a group of subjects who have shared a particular event together during a particular time span. In an educational group it would be a number of students working together through the same academic curriculum in a 4-year time period (grades 9 - 12). This term used and its effect on the statistics is difficult for even principals to understand, much less explain. The State of California began using cohort data to report graduation and dropout rates for the 2009-10 school year. Prior to 2009-10 school year the CDE calculated one-year and four-year rates based on the National Center for Education Statistics (NCES) dropout criteria.

Dropout Rate

The dropout rate is the percentage of students that leave the 9-12 instructional system without obtaining a high school diploma, General Educational Development (GED) certificate, or special education certificate of completion and fail to remain enrolled after the end of the 4th year.

Facts about High School Dropout Rates

- Being smart is seen as being weak by their peers
- A high school dropout is ineligible for 90% of jobs in America
- 75% of all prison inmates are high school dropouts
- More than 80% of prison inmates are illiterate
- Little or no support is available at home
- Roughly 80% of White and Asian students complete high school, compared to 55% of African American and Hispanic students
- A high school graduate's lifetime income is 50% to 100% more than non-graduates.

Graduation Rate

The graduation rate is the percentage of students expected to graduate in 4 years and who actually graduate.

Data obtained from the California Department of Education web page reflects the following regarding Cohort Graduation and Dropout Rates:

Cohort Outcome Data for the Classes of 2009-10 – 2012-13

	Cohort Students	Cohort Graduates	Cohort Graduation Rate	Cohort Dropouts	Cohort Dropout Rate
Benicia Unified School District					
Benicia High					
2012-13	377	372	98.7	≤10	.05
2011-12	393	372	94.7	14	3.6
2010-11	377	351	93.1	20	5.3
2009-10	421	374	88.8	42	10
Dixon Unified School District					
Dixon High					
2012-13	272	251	92.3	20	7.4
2011-12	273	248	90.8	18	6.6
2010-11	289	258	89.3	29	10
2009-10	306	278	90.3	28	9.1
Fairfield Unified School District					
Angelo Rodriguez High					
2012-13	506	492	97.2	≤10	1.6
2011-12	490	470	95.3	17	3.4
2010-11	555	511	92.1	39	7
2009-10	527	479	90.9	42	8
Fairfield High					
2012-13	288	260	90.3	19	6.6
2011-12	353	310	87.8	22	6.2
2010-11	373	302	81	57	15.3
2009-10	459	357	77.8	83	18.1
Armijo High					
2012-13	503	473	94	21	4.2
2011-12	465	414	89	39	8.4
2010-11	559	469	83.7	81	14.5
2009-10	531	439	82.7	73	13.7

Travis Unified School District**Vanden High**

2012-13	389	385	99	≤10	1.0
2011-12	367	363	98.9	0	0.3
2010-11	332	323	97.3	0	1.8
2009-10	344	337	98	0	1.7

Vacaville School District**Vacaville High**

2012-13	479	437	91.2	31	6.5
2011-12	491	438	89.2	38	7.7
2010-11	499	435	87.2	47	9.4
2009-10	556	473	85.1	68	12.2

Will C. Wood High

2012-13	481	379	90.7	31	7.4
2011-12	498	343	86.2	28	7
2010-11	414	348	84.1	53	12.8
2009-10	499	404	81	73	14.6

Vallejo City Unified School District**Jesse M. Bethel High**

2012-13	484	364	75.2	97	20
2011-12	562	411	73.1	118	21
2010-11	361	246	68.1	103	28.5
2009-10	373	232	62.2	126	33.8

Vallejo High

2012-13	479	313	65.9	141	29.7
2011-12	508	309	60.8	180	35.4
2010-11	428	219	51.2	170	39.7
2009-10	469	277	50.1	151	32.2

Suspensions and Expulsions

California Education Code Section 48925 defines Expulsion as a *means of removal of a pupil from (1) immediate supervision and control, or (2) the general supervision of school personnel.* Suspension means *removal of a pupil from ongoing instruction for adjustment purposes.*

California's State Superintendent of Public Instruction wrote in a press release January 29, 2014 that *the number of students being suspended or expelled in California declined sharply during the last school year. Educators across California work hard to keep students in school and learning.*

**Solano County High Schools reports the following Suspension, Expulsion and Truancy rates:
Classes of 2011-12 - 2012-13**

	Census Enrollment	Students Suspended	Suspension Rate	Students Expelled	Expulsion Rate	Students Truant	Truancy Rate
Benicia High							
2012-13	1,640	75	4.4	3	0.2	13	0.79
2011-12	1,651	96	5.5	0	0	62	3.5
Dixon High							
2012-13	1,163	148	12.2	0	0	466	40.07
2011-12	1,154	112	9	1	0.1	485	39
Angelo Rodriguez High							
2012-13	2,082	182	8.2	4	0.2	539	25.89
2011-12	2,154	218	9.5	9	0.4	613	26.7
Armijo High							
2012-13	2,395	304	11.5	15	0.6	1337	55.82
2011-12	2,240	324	12.9	29	1.2	919	36.6
Fairfield High							
2012-13	1,329	152	10.2	6	0.4	798	60.05
2011-12	1,502	141	8.1	11	0.5	782	45
Vanden High							
2012-13	1,666	94	5.4	0	0	225	13.51
2011-12	1,636	134	7.7	0	0	255	14.7
Vacaville High							
2012-13	2,027	132	6.1	7	0.3	722	35.62
2011-12	2,017	151	7	9	0.4	665	30.8
Will C. Wood High							
2012-13	1,666	189	10.3	1	0.1	428	25.69
2011-12	1,687	207	11.2	0	0	631	34.1
Jesse M. Bethel High							
2012-13	1,892	426	19.3	0	0	1,023	54.07
2011-12	1,997	498	21.8	0	0	733	32.1
Vallejo High							
2012-13	1,850	789	34.8	10	0.4	1,125	49.69
2011-12	1,913	763	33.8	2	0.01	1,092	48.4

Offenses Committed on Campus

The Grand Jury reviewed the CDE Data & Statistics website and created the attached addendum in this report titled "Suspension, Expulsion & Truancy Report: Total Offenses Committed". The report reveals the types of activities on school campuses that lead to suspension or expulsion. It is clear that disruption and defiance are the largest area of offenses identified. The number of disruption and defiance offenses in 2012-13 range from 102 at Benicia High to 3,000 at Vallejo High. For an unknown reason Vallejo High, Jesse Bethel High and Will C. Wood High in Vacaville did not report numbers in the category of "Use of Force or Violence

Detailed review of the addendum reveals that Vallejo High and Jesse Bethel High school's represent the highest numbers in almost every category referenced in the report. The numbers clearly are higher than all other schools combined. It is not reported how many of the incidents are duplicated by the same students. Disruptive and defiant behavior in the classroom acts as a deterrent to other students learning.

Resource Officers AKA School Liaison/Police Officers

In Solano County, eight of the ten high schools reviewed by the Grand Jury have Resource Officers - also known as Liaison/Police Officers accompanied with Site Safety Supervisors. This combination has served to provide a safe learning environment. The Vallejo City Unified School District does not have Resource Officers on their campuses.

After the tragedy of Sandy Hook Elementary School, the National Association of Resource Officers (NASRO) stated that having a properly trained school resource officer on campus is one step to making schools safer. There is a perception that a Resource Officer on campus is a school-to-prison pipeline. The NASRO stated that this concern can be eliminated by the police and school leaders establishing written protocol on procedures to be followed on the school campus.

The benefits of having a Resource Officer on campus are as follows:

- Resource Officers have direct contact with local police; therefore, faster response times to address situations that occur on campus.
- Visibility is a deterrent and gives students, parents and teachers a feeling of a safe learning environment.
- Resource Officers are identified as part of school staff.
- Parents, students and teachers communicate with and appreciate having officers on campus.
- Resource Officers are also informal counselors. They work closely with the school counselors, social workers, psychologists, nurses, teachers, and administrators as well as provide information on community services and the law to the students, parents and staff members.
- Some Resource Officers are graduates of the high school they serve.
- The Resource Officers also investigate campus crimes and has the authority to make arrests. The officers also become the liaison between the school and police community.

Site Safety Supervisors

All high schools reviewed had Site Safety Supervisors, which assist with providing school campus security and their titles varied among districts. The number of Site Safety Supervisors varied depending upon the student population. The Grand Jury reviewed the Site Safety Supervisor job description for various school districts. The Site Safety Supervisors are familiar with the students who attend the school. They perform a wide variety of duties pertaining to campus security which, include but not limited to supervision of students, maintaining safety within classrooms, school grounds, the areas or streets adjacent to the campus, and at extra-curricular school functions.

The California Education Code Section 38003 requires that *all security personnel* (Site Safety Officers) *shall carry - suitable identification cards bearing his or her photograph and signature and the signature of the Superintendent of the school district.*

The Grand Jury observed that not every campus required Site Safety Officers to wear their identification/badges in apparent conflict with California Education Code Section 38003.

IV. SUMMARY

The 2013-2014 Solano County Grand Jury visited each high school campus noted in the report, interviewed principals and other staff members, reviewed performance data, reports and identified processes and activities that appear to be successful in creating a safe educational environment. Data collected indicates a link between adequate security and higher graduation rates.

V. FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Finding 1 – The schools with Resource Officers on campus exhibited lower defiance and disruption problems and produce higher graduation rates.

Recommendation 1 – All high schools in Solano County identify funding to implement the Resource Officer program.

Finding 2 – Not all high schools were in compliance with the California Education Code 38003 regarding proper identification for Site Safety Officers.

Recommendation 2 – All high schools take the necessary measures to ensure compliance with California Education Code 38003.

Finding 3 – Vallejo High and Jesse Bethel High defiance and disruptions in classrooms are comparatively excessive to the other high schools included in this report.

Recommendation 3 - Superintendent of the Vallejo City Unified School District, principals of Vallejo High and Jesse Bethel High need to place priority on preventing and controlling the current large numbers of defiance and disruptions in class.

COMMENTS

The Vallejo City School District has shown an increase in the graduation rates in the last two years. This is a positive trend the Grand Jury expects to continue.

The number of offenses reported regarding disruption and defiance at these schools is alarming and must be addressed!

REQUIRED RESPONSES

Benicia Unified School District
Dixon Unified School District
Fairfield Unified School District
Travis Unified School District
Vacaville Unified School District
Vallejo City Unified School District

COURTESY COPIES

Clerk, Solano County Board of Supervisors
Benicia High
Dixon High
Angelo Rodriguez High
Armijo High
Fairfield High
Vanden High
Vacaville High
Will C. Wood High
Jesse Bethel High
Vallejo High
Vallejo City Unified School District Board of Education

ADDENDUM A
Suspension, Expulsion & Truancy Report: Total Offenses Committed

	Caused, Attempted, or Threatened Physical Injury	Use of Force or Violence	Possession, Use, Sale or Furnishing a Controlled Substance, Alcohol, Intoxicant	Obscene Acts, Profanity, and Vulgarity	Disruption, Defiance	Received Stolen Property	Bullying	Sexual Harassment	Harassment or Intimidation	Possession of Knife or Dangerous Object	Possession of Controlled Substance	Committed Assault or Battery on a School Employee
Benicia High												
2012-13	28	11	23	18	102	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
2011-12	35	5	25	15	115	0	1	0	2	2	2	0
Dixon High												
2012-13	No Stat	31	30	36	253	1	0	3	22	1	8	0
2011-12	No Stat	21	5	25	168	0	0	4	19	1	1	0
Angelo Rodriguez												
2012-13	42	57	17	35	268	4	6	1	0	1	0	1
2011-12	49	46	23	60	347	3	2	2	3	1	0	1
Armijo High												
2012-13	107	47	81	115	535	16	0	6	1	0	2	1
2011-12	107	24	53	134	618	0	1	3	0	4	0	0
Fairfield High												
2012-13	66	81	16	21	218	3	1	3	9	1	7	3
2011-12	52	32	35	33	250	9	No Stat	2	1	0	3	0
Vanden High												
2012-13	30	0	32	8	108	1	2	5	0	0	3	1
2011-12	31	0	15	24	172	1	1	1	1	0	15	0
Vacaville High												
2012-13	22	0	37	36	128	1	1	1	7	4	24	0

2011-12	21	1	43	28	145	2	0	1	2	3	24	0
Will C. Wood												
2012-13	65	No Stat	31	49	288	1	3	No Stat	8	3	29	3
2011-12	70	No Stat	36	92	432	11	2	No Stat	17	1	25	2
*Jesse Bethel High												
2011-12	309	No Stat	4	35	1,233	1	7	4	15	12	41	6
2012-13	385	No Stat	5	53	1,051	6	7	0	25	6	53	9
*Vallejo High												
2011-12	424	No Stat	6	140	2,757	0	4	2	13	23	117	4
2012-13	488	No Stat	4	123	3,000	2	14	8	14	13	86	1

*** denotes schools without Resource Officers**