



SAN CARLOS SCHOOL DISTRICT

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August 14, 2015

The Honorable Susan Etezadi
Judge of the Superior Court
Hall of Justice
400 County Center; 2nd Floor
Redwood City, CA 94063-1655

Dear Judge Etezadi,

The San Carlos School District has received and reviewed the 2014-15 Grand Jury Report entitled "Student Mental Health: Are Schools Doing Enough?" We appreciate the Grand Jury's interest in studying current practices regarding the provisions of mental health services provided by the school districts in San Mateo County. We have reviewed and considered the Findings and Recommendations of the Grand Jury and have the following comments:

FINDINGS

1. *National statistics show the need for mental health support for K-12 students. Statistics in San Mateo County's Adolescent Report 2014-15 reflect this same pattern for students in San Mateo County.*

Agree.

2. *According to published studies, schools are one of the best places to address this need.*

Agree.

3. *Of the County's 94,000 public school K-12 students, more than 33,000 are publically insured general education students. BHRS can treat such students on campus upon request.*

San Carlos School District does not have sufficient knowledge or information to agree with or deny this finding with respect to the number of students who are publically insured or whether BHRS can treat such students on campus upon request.

4. *Not all County schools accommodate on-campus treatment for general education publically insured students, even though BHRS could provide it.*

San Carlos School District is without sufficient knowledge or information to agree with or deny this finding with respect to whether schools within San Mateo County accommodate on-campus treatment for general education publically insured students. In San Carlos School District we provide on-campus treatment for general education students through the provision of the following tiers of support services: Prevention (using

a variety of Social-Emotional curricula and staff collaboration), Intervention (school-based counseling, social skills groups, MFT Intern/Trainees, School Counseling Interns, Small Group and Individual sessions, etc.); and Crisis Management (Emergency Behavior Plans, 5150 re-Entry, Grief and Crisis Counseling, etc.). These mental health services provided for general education students are provided for all general education students regardless of whether a general education student is publically insured.

5. *Lack of transportation to off-campus appointments can be a barrier to treatment for both publically and privately insured students.*

Agree.

6. *About 60% of publically insured general education students needing treatment for mental health issues were not seen in school and had to seek transportation to a BHRS clinic.*

San Carlos School District does not have sufficient knowledge or information in order to agree with or deny this finding with respect to the number of students who are publically insured and whether those students had to seek transportation to a BHRS clinic to access treatment.

7. *About 61,000 County students, or 65%, are privately insured. BHRS does not treat privately insured students on an ongoing basis; such students are referred to their private health insurers. Therapists paid by private insurance do not provide services on campus.*

Agree in part. San Carlos School District does not have sufficient knowledge or **information** to agree with or deny this finding with respect to the number of students who are privately insured. San Carlos School District agrees with the finding that therapists paid by private insurance do not provide services on campus.

8. *Nonprofit CBOs currently provide student programs for mental health support and one-on-one counseling on some K-12 campuses. These services are open to any student who needs them.*

San Carlos School District is without sufficient knowledge or information to agree with or deny this finding with respect to which schools within San Mateo County contract with CBOs to provide mental health support and one-on-one counseling on their campuses. In San Carlos School District, we contract with Edgewood when the need arises for such support. In San Carlos School District we provide on-campus treatment for general education and special education students through the provision of the following tiers of support services: Prevention (using a variety of Social-Emotional curricula and staff collaboration), Intervention (school-based counseling, social skills groups, MFT Intern/Trainees, School Counseling Interns, Small Group and Individual sessions, individual/group/family therapy as identified through IEP, etc.); and Crisis Management (Emergency Behavior Plans, 5150 re-Entry, Grief and Crisis Counseling, etc.). These mental health services provided for general education students are provided for all general education students regardless of whether a general education student is publically insured.

9. *Potential funding sources for CBO services include a school's general budget, parent groups, local foundations, and Measure A.*

Agree.

10. *In 2014, the County Office of Education created the position of Director of Safe and Supportive Schools, partially funded by Measure A, to coordinate mental health activities on school campuses.*

Agree. San Carlos School District understands that the position of Director of Safe and Supportive Schools was created in part to coordinate mental health activities on school campuses.

11. Not all schools in the County keep comprehensive and accurate data on mental health issues that surface in the school setting. Nor is there a comprehensive summary and count of all the CBOs and programs offered to students across the County. Thus, it is difficult to track mental health trends among local students or to measure the success of programs.

Agree in part. San Carlos School District does not have sufficient knowledge or information in order to provide a substantive answer on the status of record keeping throughout the schools within San Mateo County. San Carlos School District does agree that for a multitude of reasons, it is difficult to track mental health trends among local students or to measure the success of programs.

12. Identification and early treatment of mental health issues in the lower grades can lead to reduced stigma and improved outcomes for all students.

Agree.

RECOMMENDATIONS

1. Provide a broad spectrum of mental health services and support – ranging from mental health education to one-on-one counseling – to all students on campus during the school day.

San Carlos School District considers the mental health of its students to be critically important. For that reason, San Carlos School District currently provides a full milieu of mental health services, including varying tiers of support in prevention, intervention and crisis management including but not limited to training and support of educational staff (para-educators, teachers, administrators, support staff and SMARTE staff) and parents, implementation of social-emotional learning curriculum TK-8, conflict resolution and restorative practices, school based counseling, RTI and social skills groups, MFT and Art Therapy Intern/Trainee program in coordination with Notre Dame de Namur, School Counseling Interns in coordination with San Francisco State University; emergency behavior plans, 5150 re-entry planning, direct individual therapy; suicide risk assessments, grief and crisis counseling, non-pubic school placements, “WRAP” and residential services as well as coordination with outside agencies including BHRS, Edgewood, Esther B. Clark, AchieveKids, social services, etc.

2. Provide BHRS full access to campuses to treat publicly insured general education students if the students and their parents so desire.

San Carlos School District works closely with BHRS to serve students in the most beneficial means possible and therefore complies with this recommendation as it currently provides full access to BHRS to treat publicly insured general education students.

3. *Focus on providing mental health programs and services at the K-8 level. Such early mental health education would have the added benefit of reducing stigma before it develops further.*

San Carlos School District currently provides full milieu of mental health services as referenced above (*Recommendation 1*).

Both the Grand Jury Report and the responses of the San Carlos School District were presented to the San Carlos Elementary School District Board of Trustees on August 13, 2015.

Please do not hesitate to contact me if you have questions or require additional information.

Sincerely,

Dr. Craig Baker
Superintendent
San Carlos School District