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September 18, 2006

Memorandum

To: Daniel Sackheim, Consultant
California Department of Education

From: Susan Wong

Subject: **Countywide Plan for Provisions of Educational Services for Expelled Students**

Unlike most county schools that serve the many districts that are part of the county, the San Francisco County Schools serve only those students who live in the county of San Francisco. Most of these students, at one time, attended one or more schools within the San Francisco Unified School District.

The following paragraphs were submitted in October 2003:

“All students who have been expelled by the Board of Education are assigned to a county program for one or two semesters, depending on the nature of the offense. In addition to general education students, the county school program provides academic services for students who might be in special education or in need of English language support. Parents and guardians have the option of sending their children to the public county schools or they may choose to send them to private schools if they wish to pay tuition.”

“Depending on the particular program within the county schools, students get a variety of support services. Some of these services are provided at the county school sites while other services may be provided off campus by private or city supported community based organizations, or larger city entities such as Community Mental Health, the Department of Social Services, or the Juvenile Probation Department. Still, other students may receive alcohol or drug abuse treatment from private practitioners that are service providers through health plans.”

No specific gaps related to the education of the expelled students were identified in 2003. Perhaps it was because our number of expulsions per year has been small and manageable for an urban district of 58,000 students in 2003. For the 2005- 2006 school year, the student population was only 56,000. The number of students expelled from SFUSD was as follows:

<u>School Year</u>	<u>Number of Expulsions</u>
2003-2004	39
2004-2005	20
2005-2006	47

Currently, the county school program has downsized to three sites, the main campus being across from City Hall and in a generally accepted “safe area.” There has been an increase in general education teachers, two special education teachers, and several academic counselors. Various community- based organizations provide guidance and School-to-Career activities. One should remember that the city and county of San Francisco is a compact 49 square miles, making it fairly easy for all students to travel across town in only one or two bus rides.

It was only in this past year that we observed a special Ed student whose mother decided to keep her home for the semester. This was an exception rather than the norm. SFUSD, over the past three years, has an average daily attendance of 95% +. Most expelled students either attend a private school, a county school, or the parent transfers the student to live with a relative outside of San Francisco so that the student can get a fresh start in a new neighborhood. If the Pupil Services staff and the county school staff work closely with each other and with the probation officers, the students will comply with going to some type of school. As with other students who become truant, we have a Dropout Prevention Office that holds conferences with the students and parents to determine a resolution for truancy. We have convened the Student Attendance Review Board and the District Attorney has held mediation meetings as needed.

This year we also had our first couple of students who were so poorly behaved at one county school site that they had to be suspended or transferred to another county school site. We also offer incentives to students to do well so that we would consider suspending the second half of the expulsions that were originally ordered for one year.

The articulation and coordination between SFUSD and the SF County Schools is much streamlined than most other districts have with their county programs. Again, it is because SF County serves only SFUSD.

Only students in grade 6 – 12 are expelled and assigned to the county schools. SFUSD has expelled very few students in the elementary grades K – 5. In past years, elementary students who were expelled were recommended for suspended expulsion so that they might get an opportunity to get a fresh start at another elementary school within the district.

Students who are expelled from other school districts and who subsequently move to San Francisco are required by law to notify us of their current status as an expelled student. These students must meet with the Administrative Hearing Panel prior to their assignment into any San Francisco public school. In some incidents, the Administrative Hearing Panel has upheld the student's expulsion by placing the student in the county schools. In others, the Hearing Panel has allowed the student to transition back into the regular district program.

Approved: Gwen Chan
Interim San Francisco County Superintendent of Schools
Interim Superintendent, San Francisco Unified School District