



MEDIA ALERT
FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
March 14, 2008
SAN JOSE, CA

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MEDIA ALERT

FAILING SCHOOL SYSTEM DRIVES INCREASED CRIME IN SCC

COMMUNITY AND FAITH LEADERS HOLD 2 EVENTS TO DEMAND PUBLIC OFFICIALS CREATE GREAT SCHOOLS, SAVE LIVES

EVENT #1:

WHAT: A **PACT Community Action Meeting** with **Board Members** from the **Santa Clara County Office of Education (SCCOE)** to secure their commitment to hire a superintendent with a proven track record of addressing the dropout crisis

WHO: SCCOE Board President Jane Howard and Trustee Grace Mah plus officials and community members giving testimony about the urgent need for alternative education programs:

- Judge Patrick Tondreau, Santa Clara County Superior Court
- Chief Assist District Attorney Marc Buller, Santa Clara County
- Student Services Director Bill Chapman, Santa Clara Unified School District
- Students, youth workers, parents and grandparents

WHEN & WHERE: **Tuesday, March 18, 7:30-8:45 pm**, Calvary United Methodist Church, 729 Morse St., San Jose 95126

WHY: Studies show that when graduation rates rise, violent crime goes down. But in Santa Clara County, the dropout rate is soaring – 215% increase since 2002 in San Jose - and youth violence is on the rise.

CCPA reports nearly 5,000 students have dropped out of San Jose high schools in the last 2 years. Alternative education programs have been slashed in recent years – a 65% decrease in student slots through the Santa Clara County Office of Education since 2001. Both comprehensive high schools and limited alternative education programs are failing to meet the needs of a growing number of now out-of-school youth.

We cannot afford to continue losing our young people – San Jose lost \$34 Million in ADA due to dropouts last year for a total of \$122 Million over the past 5 years. Studies show that a student who drops out of school and ends up in a life of crime, costs society \$2.1 million in his/her lifetime.

The Santa Clara County Office of Education states its role as “a champion of public education, serving as an exemplary regional resource to students, parents, school districts, community agencies and businesses.” The SCCOE and its superintendent must provide leadership to address the dropout crisis.

PACT will challenge SCCOE Board members to commit to:

- Hiring a superintendent with a proven track record of serving high risk youth through high quality alternative education programs
- Conducting an independent evaluation of alternative education programs in Santa Clara County

EVENT #2:

WHAT: Candidates Forum: County Supervisor District 2 to secure candidates' commitments to provide leadership for change to create high quality schools and address the problems of chronically underperforming schools and violence against youth.

WHO: Candidates Frank Chavez, Richard Hobbs, Patricia Martinez-Roach, George Shirakawa

WHEN & WHERE: **April 1, 7:00-8:15 pm** – Our Lady of Guadalupe Church 2020 E. San Antonio St., San Jose, 95116

Why does this matter?:

- All children deserve excellent public schools regardless of the neighborhoods where they live and their families' socioeconomic and ethnic backgrounds. All residents want to live in safe communities.
- We have a problem: Chronically failing schools driving crime, AND we have solutions: national, research-based best practices are producing impressive results right here in East San Jose.
- **Our children and our community need bold leadership from public officials at all levels to grow the success and stop the failure.**

Events Organized by:

- ❖ People Acting in Community Together (PACT) is a multi-ethnic, interfaith organization representing 19 congregations and 50,000 families in Santa Clara County.

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