



Contra  
Costa  
County

To: Board of Supervisors  
From: Contra Costa Commission for Women  
Date: January 25, 2011  
Subject: Accept Report on Girl-on-Girl Violence

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**RECOMMENDATION(S):**

Accept report on the study of the nature of girl-on-girl violence in Contra Costa County high schools, as recommended by the Contra Costa Commission for Women.

**FISCAL IMPACT:**

None.

**BACKGROUND:**

In the fall of 2008, the CCCW conducted a study to learn about the nature of girl-on-girl violence in the high schools of Contra Costa County. The CCCW reached out to school districts located in East, Central and West Contra Costa, in the hopes of gathering pertinent information regarding girl-on-girl violence in high schools.

The principals of 43 high schools, along with nine superintendents, were contacted across the County. A letter was sent to each asking specific questions on whether records were kept on incidents of girl-on-girl violence, and what resources were made available to victims. When the CCCW did not receive any responses, a follow-up letter was mailed out with a survey addressing

☒ APPROVE

☐ OTHER

☒ RECOMMENDATION OF CNTY ADMINISTRATOR

☐ RECOMMENDATION OF BOARD COMMITTEE

Action of Board On: **01/25/2011** ☒ APPROVED AS RECOMMENDED ☐ OTHER

Clerks Notes:

**VOTE OF SUPERVISORS**

AYE: John Gioia, District I  
Supervisor  
Gayle B. Uilkema, District II  
Supervisor  
Mary N. Piepho, District III  
Supervisor  
Karen Mitchoff, District IV  
Supervisor  
Federal D. Glover, District V  
Supervisor

I hereby certify that this is a true and correct copy of an action taken and entered on the minutes of the Board of Supervisors on the date shown.

ATTESTED: January 25, 2011

David Twa, County Administrator and Clerk of the Board of Supervisors

By: June McHuen, Deputy

Contact: Terri Leider,  
925-313-9501

cc:



## BACKGROUND: (CONT'D)

bullying and violence. Out of the 43 high schools and nine school districts, only three high schools (Freedom, De Anza and Riverside) responded with data. In addition to the high schools that were included in Phase I of the study, surveys from a group of young girls from Helms Middle School, along with some of their mothers, were included in the initial report. The young girls from Helms Middle School returned 37 surveys and four surveys were returned by mothers of students for a total of 41 surveys. A grand total of 44 surveys was used to compile the initial results of Phase I of this study in 2009.

After receiving the surveys from the initial report, the CCCW decided that the surveys received did not have enough substantive information to complete the study. The Commission then decided to expand the project by adding additional phases, which would target middle and elementary schools in order to generate a comprehensive study of the County. The survey was expanded to include middle school administrators during Phase II and elementary school administrators in Phase III, due to the research from the initial report, which indicated that girl-on-girl violence starts at a much earlier age than high school. A new survey, developed as part of Phase II, was sent to every middle school, and in Phase III a slightly revised survey was sent out to every elementary school in Contra Costa County.

In a further attempt to get a higher response rate, the CCCW put the survey online at [www.surveymonkey.com](http://www.surveymonkey.com). Administrators were also given the option to mail or fax their responses back to the CCCW.

During Phase II, 15 of the 40 middle schools in the County turned in a survey (Delta Vista, Gale Ranch, Bristow, Los Cerros, Walnut Creek Intermediate, Dallas Ranch, Windemere Ranch, Black Diamond, Helms, Park, Lovonya Dejean, Valley View, Excelsior, and two additional schools which requested anonymity). Seven high schools responded to the survey: Monte Vista, John Swett, Miramonte, De Anza, Riverside, Freedom, and Las Lomas. All three of the high schools that responded to the initial attempt to collect high school data in the fall of 2008 also responded again in 2009. The CCCW used the most recent responses in its analysis of the data. Four new high schools also responded with data during the second outreach effort to the high schools. When Phase III began, only 11 of 162 elementary schools in Contra Costa County responded with data (Walnut Acres, Indian Valley, Jack London, Montevideo, Fair Oaks, Valley Verde, Discovery Bay, Creekside, Marina Vista, Walnut Heights, and Stoneman). A grand total of 33 surveys was used when compiling our data.

The CCCW's goal after compiling the data retrieved from the surveys was to prepare a report outlining the findings with a final recommendation and a statement of future plans.

In 2011, the CCCW hopes to continue its study of girl-on-girl violence by holding forums and workshops to educate the community about this issue. These forums will be targeted toward students, parent groups, teachers, and school administrators with the goal of creating awareness among and retrieving more data regarding the issue of girl-on-girl violence from

all concerned parties. A special questionnaire will be designed for students of different age levels to be distributed at these forums, and an additional questionnaire will be made for their parents and other adults in attendance (school staff, public at large, etc.). The current survey will continue to be used for school administrators and teachers to obtain up-to-date data about this type of violence.

All of CCCW research suggests that the most effective way to combat bullying is through education – teaching children about the signs, effect and consequences of bullying. This is one of the reasons the CCCW plans on conducting workshops throughout Contra Costa County about girl-on-girl violence. These workshops will present a safe environment for victims of bullying to talk about their experiences and seek counseling, and also help to allow CCCW, and the community at large, to understand the state of girl-on-girl violence in the County. The workshops will also target the bystander children who witness bullying happening around them but do not report it. The goal is to create a culture where it is encouraged to report bullying to a teacher, and it is acceptable to stand up to a bully on behalf of another person. This solution is one that organizations like the Ophelia Project are using to effectively combat bullying. Bullies will stop once they realize that it is unacceptable to bully their peers and others, and that there will be severe consequences. In order to create this environment, bullying must no longer be tolerated in schools, neighborhoods or the community.

CCCW also recommends to the County and School Districts that a proactive stance be taken in lobbying in Sacramento on behalf of students to demand stronger anti-bullying legislation. A clear and encompassing definition for bullying is needed in California anti-bullying legislation. Once this is achieved, the state will then be able to create laws that protect children from cyber bullying.

#### Future Plans:

Over the next year, CCCW plans on continuing its study of girl-on-girl violence with a specific focus on increasing the response rate to the survey. CCCW plans on administering the survey to students in the County to gain knowledge of their firsthand experience with girl-on-girl violence. CCCW would like to start setting up workshops throughout the County to educate parents, teachers and students about girl-on-girl violence and the ways in which it can be overcome. The workshops will feature guest speakers who can further shed light on the issue. CCCW will be seeking out several students to speak to the group and tell their personal experiences with girl-on-girl violence, with additionally, a psychologist who would speak to why girl-on-girl violence occurs, its myriad affects and what can be done to end it. These workshops will also include a data collection component where CCCW will be soliciting information about girl-on-girl violence from participants.

CCCW hopes to get a diverse group community members involved in these workshops. CCCW will conduct outreach to parents, students, and school faculty groups to entice them to attend. CCCW would also like to see other leaders in the community attend these workshops. With a broad coalition of educators, students, parents and community leaders as

possible CCCW would like to educate the public about girl-on-girl violence and find ways to work together in the community to stop it.

**In Conclusion:**

It is clear from this study that schools are seeing cases of girl-on-girl violence on their campuses. Girl-on-girl violence seems to be starting at a very young age, with 100% of elementary schools reporting cases of girl-on-girl violence. Many schools also report that they have no formal anti-bullying program in place on their campus. This signifies a clear need within Contra Costa County, and with the additionally alarming number of schools reporting problems with cyber-bullying, it is clear that action must be taken. In the upcoming year CCCW hopes to begin this action by educating the public on what girl-on-girl violence is and finding ways to prevent it.

**CONSEQUENCE OF NEGATIVE ACTION:**

Information gathered will not be disseminated.

**CHILDREN'S IMPACT STATEMENT:**

Not applicable.

**CLERK'S ADDENDUM**

***ACCEPTED the report; REFERRED to Public Protection Committee for discussion; and REQUESTED a link to the Contra Costa Women's Commission be added to the County website.*** The full report may be accessed at [www.womenscommission.com](http://www.womenscommission.com)