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Follow up Response: The district has maintained their non-conductive position on the time change, but will continue to review and consider the recommendation.

Stone Corral Elementary School District (Irecommendation):

- The district encourage more parental support to raise the academic performance index.
2013/2014 Response: The district will make every effort to increase parental participation.
Follow-up Response: The district is continuing their efforts in this area.

Three Rivers School District (1 recommendation):

- The Student Handbook be provided in English and Spanish.
2013/2014 Response: The original recommendation was not implemented as there were no Spanish speaking parents or students.
Follow-up Response: The district currently has one Spanish speaking parent and is in the process of translating the handbook.

Tipton School District (1 recommendation):

- The district update their website on a regular basis.
2013/2014 Response: The district stated they are in the process of hiring a technology technician and have hired a resource teacher.
Follow-up Response: The district hired a full time technology technician in November 2014, to regularly update their website.

Traver School District (1 recommendation):

- The district seek Measure R funds for the construction of sidewalks around the school's perimeter.
2013/2014 Response: The recommendation is being implemented with Measure R funds.
Follow-up Response: All projects funded by Measure R were completed on October 6, 2014.

Woodville Elementary School District (1 recommendation):

- The district's Board of Trustees should take advantage of training on how to conduct meetings.
2013/2014 Response: The district's board members will take advantage of available training.
Follow-up Response: The board members have received training and attended workshops. They will continue to avail themselves of any training on an ongoing basis.

Water Please:

This report recommended Tulare County review and implement their water conservation programs and apply for any available Federal and State grants for the affected unincorporated areas needing potable water. Follow-up showed that the Tulare County Resource Management Agency has successfully managed the various county water conservation projects and has received grants to further assist communities in need.

CHILD SUPPORT SERVICES

BACKGROUND:

The Child Support Services Agency (CSSA) came into existence on January 4, 1975, under Title IV-D of the Social Security Act. This law was enacted to form a department within California's Office of Health and Human Services to oversee the operation of an enforcement program. This department was established to assist parents with collection of child support payments and obtain health insurance for their children. Until 2001, this agency was a part of the Office of the District Attorney and is now an independent agency of the County.

There are fifty-two CSSA branch offices in California. Most counties have their own office; however, some of the smaller counties work together as one branch. Out-of-state cases are processed with the assistance of State headquarters. In Tulare County, CSSA has transitioned from a punitive agency into a family support service.

REASON FOR INVESTIGATION:

The Tulare County Grand Jury (TCGJ) initiated an investigation to inform the public how the CSSA operates in order to meet the needs of children.

METHOD OF INVESTIGATION:

- Interviewed witnesses
- Reviewed documentation

FACTS:

1. CSSA has both a mission and vision statement.
 - Mission Statement: Enrich our community by partnering with parents to obtain accurate child support orders to assist families in meeting medical and financial needs.
 - Vision Statement: Educate and empower families with the knowledge and resources to promote the well-being of children.
2. CSSA is responsible for the collection and distribution of child support payments in Tulare County.
3. In 2017, the goal is to collect 75.6% of current support payments due.
4. CSSA has 204 staff positions, of which only one is an investigator.

5. CSSA is 66% federally funded and 34% state funded. None of the funding is provided by the county; however, services are administered by the County.
6. The State Department of Child Support Services determines the yearly budget for each county.
7. Most CSSA services provided are free.
8. CSSA establishes paternity, locates missing parents, establishes and modifies support orders, enforces orders by collecting and distributing support payments, maintains accounting records for money owed and distributed, establishes and enforces medical, dental and vision care and has a family law facilitator available.

FINDINGS:

- F1. In fiscal year 2015-2016, CSSA had 24,460 established child support cases in its system and was able to provide resources and services to 25,210 children in Tulare County. Of the child support owed, 74.3% was collected and distributed.
- F2. Resources provided include access to a Family Law Facilitator who provides information and assists parents to obtain and complete court forms at no charge. An Ombudsperson is also available to help resolve complaints, explain the complaint process, rights and responsibilities, the hearing process and arrange for interpreters or special accommodations.
- F3. Paternity must be established before the court will order child support. The Paternity Opportunity Program offers an easy and free method of establishing paternity by having both parents sign the form in the hospital after the child's birth. The hospital will file the form with the Department of Child Services. Paternity may also be established by genetic testing if either parent requests verification of paternity. The genetic testing will exclude any person who is not the biological father. It provides confirmation of paternity with a 99% accuracy rate. If there is a dispute about paternity and either party refuses testing, the court may order the parties submit to be tested or be in contempt of court. If the alleged father refuses or is unavailable/missing the court can actually establish paternity through reviewing evidence.
- F4. A parent ordered to pay child support is responsible for meeting that obligation. Income, other financial responsibilities, amount of time each parent has custody (if shared) are taken into consideration. If a non-custodial parent finds it impossible to meet the full obligation, they should notify the local child support agency as soon as possible to avoid or minimize adverse actions. The child support payments will still be due, but it may be possible to work out a payment plan. There are many reasons either parent may request child support payments be modified.
- F5. Locating a non-custodial parent who is determined to be in arrears of child support payments, requires the Local Child Support Agency to access all appropriate sources within seventy-five days. The State office is the branch that works with other states, in a sophisticated computerized effort, to