

## San Joaquin County Office of Education

James A. Mousalimas, County Superintendent of Schools

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE  
016-007: Asante

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### **Best-Selling Author Meets Students in Juvenile Hall**

*MK Asante visits **one**.John F. Cruikshank to share life story and promote literacy*

MK Asante – best-selling author, college professor, filmmaker and rapper – met with students inside the San Joaquin County Juvenile Justice Center to share his story about his own life struggles and deliver a message of hope to students in the juvenile justice system.

“When I look at you all, I see myself. I wrote this book for you all,” he said today to about 50 students at the San Joaquin County Office of Education (SJCOE) **one**.John F. Cruikshank Jr. School. He connected with students while talking about education, art and growing up in a rough neighborhood of Philadelphia.

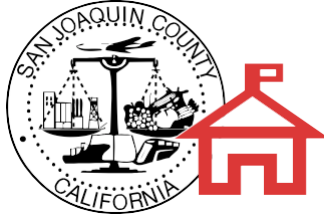
Asante is the first author to speak to students at the school that is part of a push to promote the importance of reading that will bring up to four authors a year to juvenile hall and the addition of a new library, which could open in early 2016. “A face-to-face meeting with an inspiring author can do more than just get across the importance of reading,” said Brandy Thurman, school administrator. “The big picture is for students to be able to see how they are able to change their own lives.”

Education shaped Asante’s life. He is a tenured professor of creative writing and film in the Department of English and Language Arts at Morgan State University. His book “Buck” is a powerful memoir that was a Washington Post Best-seller and was an NAACP Image Award finalist for Outstanding Literary Work.

The **one**.John F. Cruikshank Jr. School is an SJCOE Court School and part of the SJCOE **one**. program. Students at the school are adjudicated youth located at the San Joaquin County Juvenile Justice Center. The curriculum is designed to help students develop an appreciation of themselves and others in an environment that is balanced between state standards and individual needs. The focus is on problem solving, critical thinking and successful transition skills.

The school is named after the late Judge John F. Cruikshank Jr., San Joaquin County’s first African-American judge. A juvenile court judge, Cruikshank believed that every young person has the potential to succeed. The school that bears his name is inside the San Joaquin County Juvenile Justice Center, which is operated by the San Joaquin County Probation Office.

For more information about MK Asante, please go to: <http://mkasante.com/>.



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### ***About the San Joaquin County Office of Education:***

*San Joaquin County Office of Education (SJC OE) provides educational leadership, resources, and services to support schools throughout the county. With its highly regarded programs, innovative staff, and community partnerships, SJC OE ensures that every student in San Joaquin County has the opportunity of a quality education. For more information, visit [www.sjcoe.org](http://www.sjcoe.org).*