



San Diego County Probation Department

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Adolfo Gonzales, Chief Probation Officer

September 28, 2018

Dr. Amy Lansing
Juvenile Justice Commission Chair
2901 Meadow Lark Drive
San Diego, CA 92123

Response to the 2018 Juvenile Justice Commission (JJC) Facility Inspection Report for Girls Rehabilitation Facility (GRF)

Dear Dr. Lansing:

We are in receipt of the Juvenile Justice Commission 2018 Facility Inspection Report for Girls Rehabilitation Facility. Below, please find the San Diego County Probation Department responses to the JJC Recommendations as it pertains to GRF.

RECOMMENDATION #1: The JJC recognizes that the current facilities have structural limitations with regards to the kitchen designs, garden placements, and recreational areas but strongly recommend that these issues are proactively taken into consideration when designing the layout and amenities available at the new campus.

Important considerations should include:

- a) shared garden areas (not limited to access to only girls or boys);
- b) dining and classroom options for gender integrated activities for appropriate youth (based on age or other considerations). The San Diego County Office of Education could use a model like the coeducational class instruction facilitated at San Pasqual Academy;
- c) open recreational spaces;
- d) improved meal plans that incorporate healthy foods that are not degraded by reheating;
- e) kitchen facilities that permit actual cooking, rather than limited (e.g., reheating) functions in order to facilitate culinary art training, dining and hospitality training;
- f) adequate individual meeting and classroom spaces for confidential meetings with health professionals, advocates and lawyers etc., as well as an outside provider and community groups providing services or classes (e.g., parenting classes etc.); and
- g) expanded Career Technical Education (CTE) options available to youth (e.g.

horticulture, media arts).

RESPONSE #1:

The County of San Diego expects to break ground on the first phase of the Kearny Mesa Master Plan in the summer of 2019. It is currently expected that all of the above recommendations will be addressed as plans move forward on the overall Juvenile Justice Campus. However, as we await completion of the first phase, there are also plans to expand horticulture areas and opportunities for youth at the current Kearny Mesa Juvenile Detention Facility and Urban Camp.

While the new Juvenile Justice Campus is expected to improve the kitchen facilities and overall appeal of the food served, Probation is not waiting to address food quality. Over the last year, Probation has worked closely with the Sheriff, community advocates like the Children's Initiative, and the youth we serve in our facilities to continually improve our food service. This includes changes to the menu based on input from a survey of the youth, increased portion sizes, fruit bowls in each unit for fresh snacks throughout the day, additional condiments and spices for the food, an additional snack time, and expanded special holiday meals for youth and their families.

Presently, most Probation Department meals are prepared offsite, frozen, and reheated in Probation kitchens. Earlier this year, Probation and General Services began renovating the kitchen at Kearny Mesa Juvenile Detention Facility to transition our model to on-site, freshly prepared meals for youth. Kitchen improvements at Kearny Mesa Juvenile Detention Facility will be completed later this month. Once completed and fully operational, the on-site meals will further improve quality and provide additional culinary arts opportunities for youth in custody. It should be noted, the prepared meals will be cooked and served fresh daily.

The Probation Department understands the importance of nutrition in supporting positive physical and psychological development and that proper nutrition can improve outcomes in education, increase responsiveness to rehabilitative programming, and reduce violent behavior. To that end, we have and will continue to work closely with our partners to improve the quality and appeal of the meals served to youth in our care.

RECOMMENDATION #2: 2. The JCC continues to recommend the use of both evidenced based practices and programs. For future reports, we would appreciate listings for each facility, indicating which provided services are 'practices' and which are actual programs being offered by contracted services. Data from contracted services should be accessible on completion (and where possible during follow-up) for fidelity monitoring and oversight.

RESPONSE #2: Data is maintained for all contracted services and is available for review upon request. Existing programs are reevaluated as part of the contract cycle and Probation continues to identify and explore options to enhance evidence based programming. Additionally, our partnership with the Center for Juvenile Justice Reform under the Youth in Custody Practice Model technical assistance program is expected to result in additional evidence based programming recommendations.

RECOMMENDATION #3: The JJC recommends continued Trauma Informed Practices training for all staff, and the use of these practices with all youth. We encourage the use of local resources and consultants when possible.

RESPONSE #3: The San Diego Probation Department continues to provide training to officers who are assigned to specialized units that incorporate trauma informed care practices. Our

ultimate goal is to provide Trauma Informed Care training to all officers assigned to institutions and Probation will continue to explore opportunities to enhance and expand training opportunities for staff that will have positive impacts with the youth in our care.

RECOMMENDATION #4: The JJC continues to recommend that OC spray be minimally used, as recent reports are indicating. We further recommend continued and enhanced staff training (trauma informed practices, conflict resolution, Professional Assault Crisis Training, etc.), while exploring alternatives that are as effective as the use of OC spray and eventually eliminate the need for OC spray or tools with negative health consequences.

RESPONSE #4: The department continues to review and evaluate the need for OC in institutions; however, OC spray remains one option available to break up fights and assaults, and is used only when other options are ineffective or would be unsafe.

Additionally, the department is working with the team from the Youth in Custody Practice Model to sustainably transition our model to one based on positive youth development. It is anticipated that in January 2019, Institutional Services will be transitioning our staff to a 12-hour shift schedule. With this anticipated change, the staff to youth ratio will be increased within each unit at all facilities while providing additional staff coverage for youth engagement, staff training and relief. Staff will also be assigned to teams, working the same schedule as their direct supervisor, for better supervision and improved fidelity as we continue to transition to a positive youth development model within all of our institutions.

RECOMMENDATION #5: Specific considerations for Girls' Rehabilitation Facility include:

- a. The JJC recommends that field trips/outside events be established as part of the regular program--perhaps organized by the three teams now at GRF--going outside the institution at least once a month. Possibilities include athletic events, museum exhibits, college visits, and theater performances.

RESPONSE: Probation actively collaborates with our judicial, community, and county partners, as well as educational and mental health partners to identify programs and areas we can improve and enhance opportunities for youth, including mentoring opportunities.

- b. The JJC recommends that family visits should be expanded to Saturdays (as well as Thursday nights and Sunday mornings).

RESPONSE: Probation will continue to identify opportunities to enhance visitation opportunities for youth and parents on a weekly basis.

- c. The JJC recommends that GRF report fully on data regarding the number of girls with "504" plans (outlines accommodations for people whose disabilities cause them to require accommodations for equal access to education) and the number of Individual Education Plan (IEP) meetings held during the year. JJC recommends that all GRF staff receive training on the definition of a 504 Plan and that GRF establish a protocol to inform all staff when a youth has a 504 Plan and familiarize staff with the components of any such Plan.

RESPONSE: Probation will work with San Diego County Office of Education to develop a plan to deliver IEP information to Probation staff to assist them in making trauma based decisions when interacting with youth. We will continue to explore opportunities to enhance and expand training opportunities for staff that will have positive impacts with the youth in our care.

Thank you for this opportunity to respond to the Juvenile Justice Commission 2018 Facility Inspection Report for Girls Rehabilitation Facility.

Very respectfully,



ADOLFO GONZALES
CHIEF PROBATION OFFICER
SAN DIEGO COUNTY PROBATION DEPARTMENT

CC: Rueben Littlejohn, Assistant Chief Probation Officer
Scott Huizar, Deputy Chief of Institutional Services
Christina Nyikes, Division Chief, Girls Rehabilitation Facility

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