



# San Diego County Probation Department

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*Adolfo Gonzales, Chief Probation Officer*

October 12, 2016

Kimberly D. Allan  
Juvenile Justice Commission Chair  
2901 Meadow Lark Drive  
San Diego, CA 92123

## **Response to 2015 JJC Juvenile Facility Inspection – Girls' Rehabilitation Facility**

Ms. Allan,

The Probation Department/Girls' Rehabilitation Facility is in receipt of the 2016 Inspection Report by the Juvenile Justice Commission. The Juvenile Justice Commission noted the follow-up recommendations as follows:

1. **RECOMMENDATION:** Since GRF is designed as a "camp" for girls and since there was only one Critical Incident Report (CIR) involving the use of pepper spray for calendar year 2015, the Juvenile Justice Commission recommends that pepper spray (O.C.: Oleoresin Capsicum) be entirely eliminated at GRF. Most counties in California do not use pepper spray in juvenile facilities and many oversight groups have recommended the elimination or reduction of O.C. spray in San Diego juvenile facilities. We believe that its elimination at GRF would be a positive step for San Diego County which could affect the Probation Department's reliance on pepper spray in its other facilities.

**RESPONSE:** Probation continues to evaluate the use of O.C. OC spray is used in accordance with the department's current Use of Force Continuum and is only utilized when necessary and other measures have not been successful; or when there is a perceived threat of physical harm. OC spray often mitigates injury to staff and youth. Probation has been investigating a variety of techniques to decrease the use of OC. The Department is piloting the implementation of whistles to gain compliance prior to the use of OC. The Department is also looking to implement the Missouri Model in our facilities to increase engagement and reduce violence and the use of OC.

2. **RECOMMENDATION:** Since GRF is the smallest of the Probation Department's facilities; it should be a model for treatment and rehabilitation. One idea by the Chief Probation Officer (shared at a Juvenile Justice Commission meeting) would be to personalize the interaction by calling the girls by their first names and labelling each room by first and last names. Instead of calling a youth Miss (Last Name) as was done during the inspection, the girl would be addressed by her first name. Therefore, the Juvenile Justice Commission recommends that name placards and name tags

reflect first and last names and Probation Department personnel at GRF (and at other juvenile facilities) work on calling the girls by their first names.

**RESPONSE:** The Department is not opposed to calling youth by their first names and sometimes Officers do call youth by their first name. Name tags worn on the wrist have first and last names. The Department does not place both names on door placards out of concern for confidentiality. However, the Department will consider using first names and last initial on door placards.

- RECOMMENDATION:** GRF (like the boys' facility at Camp Barrett) uses an inmate leadership system for its youth by forming teams and selecting a team leader and a "dorm" counsel. Each of the girls selected for these positions by the Probation Department and by other youth earn "points" toward early release or extra privileges. It is noted that there is no dormitory housing at GRF as each girl is assigned to a single cell (room) unlike the dorms at the boys' facility at Camp Barrett. The Juvenile Justice Commission believes that the system of selecting and removing leaders at GRF engenders emotions and psychological problems that outweigh its benefits. Since GRF has such a small population, the Juvenile Justice Commission recommends that the team leader and dorm counsel program be eliminated.

**RESPONSE:** The team leader and dorm counsel positions provide the youth an opportunity to practice responsibility, leadership and decision making. They are provided guidance and counsel by officers and professional collaborative staff. It also provides them with goals to strive for within the program.

As part of the 2016 Juvenile Justice Commission Report, the Commission made the following recommendations for Probation Department, Behavioral Health Services, and Office of Education. Below are the recommendations and responses from the Probation Department.

*For Probation Department and Behavioral Health Services:*

- RECOMMENDATION:** GRF has an authorized capacity according to the Board of State and Community Corrections (BSCC) of 45 girls. The Probation Department has adjusted the capacity to 25 and there were 23 girls on the day of the inspection. Since the Commission believes that the program at GRF is a good one which could benefit more girls and that it is now under-utilized, we recommend that the Probation Department, along with Behavioral Health Services, identify other appropriate girls in Units 70 and 700 at the Kearny Mesa Juvenile Detention Facility and ask for court approval to transfer them to GRF, setting the maximum capacity at 45 girls.

**RESPONSE:** The girls in Unit 700 are awaiting adjudication or placement. Some of the Unit 700 girls may be adjudicated and assessed to the GRF program. KMJDF Unit 70 houses girls who are assessed and committed to the YOU program by the Court. YOU is a more secure program housing youth who in the past would have been committed to the Division of Juvenile Justice. It would not be in accordance with best practices to mix the YOU population with GRF.

- RECOMMENDATION:** As of March 2016, the Probation Department has instituted the Columbia Suicide Severity Rating Scale ("C-SSRS") to screen youth upon entry at GRF and its other juvenile

facilities, for possible suicidal actions and suicidal ideation. The Juvenile Justice Commission recommends that the C-SSRS also be utilized upon discharge from GRF and that Behavioral Health Services designate a "trainer" to assist the outside Probation Officers with mental health services, specifically suicide prevention, when GRF girls (and other youth) are released.

**RESPONSE:** All youth are assessed upon intake to KMJDF and upon transfer to GRF. If there is any suspicion that a youth is at risk, she would be referred to the STAT team and appropriate measures would be taken prior to her release. The casework Probation Officer is involved in case planning for the youth.

3. **RECOMMENDATION:** As a "camp" setting with a patio and garden, GRF is suitable for a therapy dog program as mentioned during the inspection on July 11, 2016. The Juvenile Justice Commission observed such a therapy dog program during a past inspection at the Polinsky Children's Center. Therefore, it is recommended that the Probation Department and Behavioral Health Services formally set up a program utilizing volunteers from the Helen Woodward Center, or another appropriate place, to bring therapy dogs to GRF during a regularly scheduled visitation program.

**RESPONSE:** The Probation Department is already developing a Dog program to be located at GRF and EMJDF.

4. **RECOMMENDATION:** All personnel should be attuned to the special needs of LGBTQI girls and the existence of bullying or other special problems interfering with maximum rehabilitation while in detention.

**RESPONSE:** Probation provides information during our PREA training. Department staff receives training in LGBTQI which incorporates awareness and bullying. The Department will evaluate the possibility of adding additional awareness. The Department's suicide prevention plan was recently updated and is based on nationally recognized best practices.

*For Office of Education:*

1. **RECOMMENDATION:** GRF should have Special Education Teachers on staff dedicated to its facility and not shared with the Kearny Mesa Juvenile Detention Facility. Service logs should be created, or updated, keeping track of all services provided to girls with IEPs.

**RESPONSE:** All SDCOE Momentum Learning teachers and substitute teachers hold necessary credentials for the positions in which they are working. The vast majority of students enrolled in the SOAR Academies are credit deficient upon enrollment. Intersessions are offered to provide students with additional opportunities to earn credits toward high school graduation. Intersessions are operated with a mixture of full-time SDCOE teachers and visiting teachers. Priority placement is given to our full-time teachers who are interested and willing to work intersession.

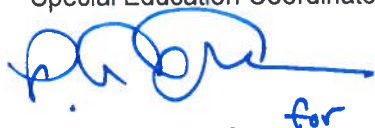
2. **RECOMMENDATION:** The garden at GRF is flourishing and the entire staff are duly proud but it appears that the horticultural program is not fully integrated into the educational system nor are grown vegetables able to be used as food. The Commission recommends that during school time, the garden be utilized as an apprentice-type component for the educational program.

The Juvenile Justice Commission is aware that at Monarch School (operated by the San Diego County Office of Education) the gardening program is integrated into the education curriculum. We recommend that the San Diego Office of Education formally develop a horticultural garden education program at GRF by utilizing educators and volunteers and give class credit to the girls who complete the class.

**RESPONSE:** The educational programs at Kearny Mesa and GRF are part of the educational community collectively known and operated as Kearny Mesa SOAR. As such, all educational supports and services are provided by the administration, teachers, and support staff of Kearny Mesa SOAR. Special Education Services are delivered in accordance with state and federal requirements based on the Individuals with Disabilities in Education Act (IDEA). Information regarding special education services provided is recorded by Designated Instruction Services (DIS) providers with three components: Date Time Service, Special Education Teachers record of providing services include their assignment and master schedule, and, each teacher has a student file in which they record case management activities.

3. **RECOMMENDATION:** All teachers should be trained on the law regarding "child find" and be instructed on identifying girls with disabilities or other educational needs.

**RESPONSE:** All teachers receive annual training regarding special education protocols. SDCOE Special Education Coordinator and Senior Director for Special Education facilitate the training.



ADOLFO GONZALES  
CHIEF PROBATION OFFICER

cc: Cesar Escuro, Exec. Deputy Chief Probation Officer  
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