



San Diego County Probation Department

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Cesar Escuro, Interim Chief Probation Officer

April 21, 2021

Yvette Klepin
Juvenile Justice Commission Chair
2901 Meadow Lark Drive
San Diego, CA 92123

Response to the 2020 Juvenile Justice Commission (JJC) Facility Inspection Report for Kearny Mesa Juvenile Detention Facility

Dear Ms. Klepin:

We are in receipt of the Juvenile Justice Commission 2020 Facility Inspection Report for Kearny Mesa Juvenile Detention Facility. Below, please find the San Diego County Probation Department responses to the JJC Recommendations as it pertains to Kearny Mesa Juvenile Detention Facility.

Recommendation a:

The Commission recommends all staff (Probation and collaborative) receive the same training regarding Trauma.

Response a:

The Probation Department is collaborating with San Diego State University to provide training to staff in the areas of: Adolescent Brain Development, Trauma-Informed Care, Implicit Bias, and Restorative Practices, while continuing to explore opportunities to enhance and expand training opportunities for staff in Juvenile Institutions CORE training. Over the past year, Probation has been increasing requirements in new contracts for providers to receive these trainings but has not specified the provider. Starting in Fiscal Year 2021-22, when the new San Diego State University Academy for Professional Excellence (Academy) contract begins, Probation will be directing new contracts to receive training from the Academy for consistency and best practices.

Recommendation b:

The Commission recommends the Probation Department inform all collaborative staff on where to find the Facility Policy and Procedure Manual and review which policies collaborative staff are required to review.

Response b:

The Probation Department is in the process of transitioning our policy and procedures to a new format. As this project progresses, the policy documents will be moved to a more accessible format. They will also continue to be reviewable through our public facing website. We will work to ensure that collaborative partners are educated about where they can access them.

Recommendation c:

The Commission recommends the facility use Harm Resistant Blankets for all youth.

Response c:

The Probation Department has procured 175 Harm Reduction Blankets to date and additional purchases are planned. The department currently provides Harm Reduction blankets to youth who have been identified as at risk for self-harm and anticipates expanding their use as supply increases, with the goal of replacing all bedding.

Recommendation d:

The Commission recommends the Department continue to use the current staffing levels to reduce and eliminate the use of OC spray.

Response d:

The Probation Department continues to implement a staffing model that is supported by national best practices and is committed to developing a positive youth development culture where violence is minimal, and staff do not feel the need to carry OC spray for their own safety. The Probation Department is also training all direct care staff in the areas of Adolescent Brain Development, Trauma-Informed Care, Implicit Bias, and Restorative Practices. It is anticipated that this will improve communication and rapport between staff and youth and result in a reduction of serious incidents and the use force including OC spray. The Department remains committed to fully implementing the Mandt System in Fiscal Year 2021-22.

Recommendation e:

The Commission recommends the Probation Department review incident reports collectively in order to ascertain who is using OC spray and when it is being used to assist in decision making to ensure youth safety.

Response e:

The Probation Department is committed to developing a positive youth development culture where violence is minimal, and staff do not feel the need to carry OC spray for their own safety. The Probation Department is training all direct care staff in the areas of Adolescent Brain Development, Trauma-Informed Care, Implicit Bias, and Restorative Practices. It is anticipated that this will improve communication and rapport between staff and youth and result in a reduction of serious incidents and the use force including OC spray.

When OC spray is used, it is always documented in the form of a written incident report. From these reports we are able to collect data on the frequency, amount and which specific officers are using this type of force. This data is regularly reviewed at a department executive level and at the facility management level. San Diego County Probation Department has partnered with national experts from the Council of Juvenile Justice of Administrators (CJJA) to review and improve our de-escalation and use of force practices to ensure they are within national best practices.

Each facility also has a use of force review committee that meets monthly to review all use of force cases from the preceding month, to include all uses of OC. This review committee renders a single finding to determine if the force used was within policy and will provide recommendations for areas of additional training, changes in policy, or if further administrative investigation is needed. Additionally, the facility compiles specific data on all OC spray use and the staff

deploying OC. As the department evaluates the first data collection period under our new contract with Performance Based Standards, additional data system upgrades will be requested in order to more effectively identify trends.

Recommendation f:

The Commission recommends the Probation Department contract for the use of PbS system for data collection to ensure decisions are evidence based.

Response f:

The Probation Department has entered into a multi-year contract with Performance Based Standards (PbS) and is entering our first phase of candidacy data collection through in April, 2021.

Recommendation g:

The Commission recommends the TRU unit continue and youth in the TRU unit be placed in a more therapeutic environment.

Response g:

While the Trauma Responsive Unit (TRU) is no longer a standalone unit, due to its success, the Probation Department expanded the training to all staff and now offers the trauma informed care programming to all youth housed at KMJDF. The Department believes the new Youth Transition Campus and trainings in Fiscal Year 2021-22 is pushing the entire juvenile detention system towards trauma-informed care model to best support youth and staff.

Recommendation h:

The Commission recommends the Probation Department develop a robust training in the area of Implicit Bias, Adolescent Brain Development, Trauma Informed Care, and Restorative Justice for all staff (Probation and Collaborative) staff working with youth in the facility.

Response h:

The Probation Department is collaborating with San Diego State University to provide training to staff in the areas of: Adolescent Brain Development, Trauma-Informed Care, Implicit Bias, and Restorative Practices, while continuing to explore opportunities to enhance and expand training opportunities for staff in Juvenile Institutions CORE training. These classroom trainings began in February 2020 but were impacted by COVID-19 before transitioning to virtual learning. All current staff in the Institutions will receive these trainings by June 30, 2021.

Recommendation i:

The Commission recommends Probation Executive staff create a culture of transparency where line-staff not only know what change or directive is but also the why with guidelines if any apply.

Response i:

The Probation Department has been working to increase transparency and line staff access to information about the research, trends in the field, and other reasons behind the changes that are occurring. Before the pandemic, the department had begun a series of town hall meetings with line staff for this purpose. This effort has been challenged by limitations to in-person gatherings, but the Deputy Chief for Institutional Services has been making himself present in each facility on a weekly basis throughout the year, in part to support these efforts. We anticipate that the town hall meetings will resume once limitations on in-person gatherings have been lifted.

Recommendation j:

The Commission recommends facility administration review current protocols and schedule for youth in the quarantine unit for more time out of their rooms and recreation if they have tested negative for COVID-19.

Response j:

Quarantine procedures continue to be evaluated in consultation with our health advisors including the County's Public Health Services and our medical contractor.

Recommendation k:

The Commission recommends Behavior Health research, review and increase services for youth who are "Tri-Diagnosed."

Response k:

Behavioral Health Services responds: Behavioral Health Services, the Probation Department and the Children's Initiative have been collaborating to implement a specialty treatment program for tri-diagnosed youth that will replace the current Y.O.U. program. This new program, "Healing Opportunities for Personal Empowerment" (H.O.P.E.) will expand the BHS STAT Team to include dedicated licensed mental health professionals whose primary purpose is to increase the provision of therapeutic services to these youth. Services will specifically target the triad of treatment needs consisting of mental health, substance abuse, and criminogenic needs. The HOPE program will provide an array of services such as intensive individual counseling, group therapy, psychiatry, psychoeducational workshops, mentoring, focus on family involvement, community engagement, job readiness training, educational assistance, a furlough program and an intensive aftercare program. The additional clinical staff will work on the unit side-by-side with the probation officers throughout the youth's waking hours, thereby creating a healing, therapeutic milieu. The Probation Department will also offer supplemental services for the youth on the unit through a HOPE Probation contract.

Recommendation l:

The Commission recommends the Juvenile Court and Community Schools administer intellectually appropriate education for all youth so they are working at the appropriate grade level.

Response l:

San Diego County Office of Education responds: All JCCS core courses are A-G approved, and we only use CA State Standards approved curriculum. Early in the last year of Distance Learning, we had to use some supplemental materials in our learning packets to accommodate the extraordinary circumstances. As we transitioned to Google Classroom, we reverted to our Board approved curriculum that is at grade level. Now that we are back to In-person Learning, students are placed in appropriate courses according to their grade level.

Recommendation m:

The Commission recommends Probation and Juvenile Court and Community Schools expand on-line college opportunities for youth that have completed high school.

Response m:

San Diego County Office of Education responds:
We continue to expand our college opportunities for our high school graduates by enrolling them in courses of their interest. In the last year, it was difficult to offer a large variety of courses due to pandemic. The school had to transition to distance learning which only allowed our certificated

and classified staff to telecommute (work from home). With all the obstacles, we were able to collaborate with partners in probation and continue to offer college classes to all our students with 30% of our students participating.

Thank you for this opportunity to respond to the Juvenile Justice Commission 2020 Facility Inspection Report for Kearny Mesa Juvenile Detention Facility.

Very respectfully,



CESAR ESCURO
Interim Chief Probation Officer

CE/ms

cc: Ruben Leyva, Assistant Chief Probation Officer
Scott Huizar, Executive Deputy Chief, Youth Development and Community Support Services
Alejandro Zermeno, Deputy Chief, Institutional Services
Christiene Andrews, Division Chief, Kearny Mesa Juvenile Detention Facility