



San Diego County Probation Department

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Adolfo Gonzales, Chief Probation Officer

October 20, 2017

Edward Weiner
Juvenile Justice Commission Chair
2901 Meadow Lark Drive
San Diego, CA 92123

Response to the 2017 Juvenile Justice Commission (JJC) Facility Inspection Report for Kearny Mesa Juvenile Detention Facility (KMJDF)

Dear Mr. Weiner:

We are in receipt of the Juvenile Justice Commission 2017 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 #1: "TRU Unit:

The Juvenile Justice Commission recognizes the accomplishments of the Trauma Responsive Unit (TRU) which offers trauma-informed interventions to a small subset of the overall population. With research establishing a high prevalence of trauma-related needs among youth involved with the juvenile justice system, it would seem likely that many more, if not all, of the population would benefit from trauma-informed and responsive staff members, interventions, and programming. The Juvenile Justice Commission recommends increasing the impact of the TRU Unit to serve a larger number of boys and girls. This may entail broad dissemination of trauma-informed training to all staff members or through expansion of the unit itself, with preference given to the approach that will meaningfully impact the largest number of youth incarcerated in the facility. Also, the JJC recommends that Probation continue establishing a Trauma Response Unit (TRU) for girls."

RESPONSE #1: The Trauma Responsive Unit started on 02/29/16 and is a boys unit housed in unit 100. Probation will evaluate the possibility of expanding the same model to other units in the future. Probation has plans to expand the same model to a girls unit early next year. Probation is expanding trauma-informed training to all facility staff for next year.

RECOMMENDATION #2: "Hair care products/combs:

Through discussion with African American and multiracial youth in the facility, it became apparent that they lack access to hair care products designed for the texture of their hair.

Specifically, the young women indicated they do not have proper brushes to comb their hair, resulting in hair loss and damage. According to the American Academy of Dermatology, African American hair is “unique in appearance and structure, and is especially fragile and prone to injury and damage.” The Juvenile Justice Commission recommends that combs or brushes specifically for African American hair be distributed as a method of improving the cultural humility and responsiveness of the facility while meeting the most basic needs of the boys and girls.”

RESPONSE #2: Probation is exploring appropriate ethnically sensitive hair care products for our youth and will order appropriate combs and hair products to keep hair healthy and orderly.

RECOMMENDATION #3: “Education:

- a. Computer and internet access – Review of the Pre-Inspection Worksheet and direct conversations with the youth indicated that 10 students are taking online courses for college credits through Grand Canyon University or Southwestern, Palomar, Mira Costa, and Cuyamaca Colleges. Currently, the facility limits internet and computer access to 2-3 hours per day. The youth enrolled in the online courses shared concern over the short time limit and the challenges it poses to completing and excelling in their courses. The Juvenile Justice Commission recommends increasing computer and internet access for college-going youth to be consistent with the guidelines for online courses, with the widely accepted standard as 6 hours a week per course credit.
- b. Career and Technical Education – Please urge the County Board of Supervisors to fund a trailer or a bus with staff to transport youth to CTE classes to broaden the experience of youth being detained for at least three weeks.
- c. Community Programs – Task a specific instructor for short-term youth to build relations with community programs and education staff to be in continual contact for six months after a youth leaves the facility.
- d. Evidence-Based Programs.”

RESPONSE #3a: Our students who are enrolled in an online college course receive computer and internet access four to five hours per day. In order to make sure that our students are provided with this additional time, a certificated teacher, counselor or teacher's aide has been assigned to the classroom. Additionally, with the assistance of Probation, YOU students who are enrolled in college are now receiving instruction in a separate classroom, and thus have gained an additional two hours of instructional time.

RESPONSE #3b: This year two CTE instructors have been assigned to Kearny Mesa. To broaden the experiences available to youth while in the facility, Kearny Mesa students have been acquiring skills during this term in ukulele and guitar, as well as learning about the music industry. Next semester, students will be exposed to simple home repairs that include installing a faucet and creating a bathroom vanity.

RESPONSE #3c: Student Support Technicians, serve as a technical resource to school districts and schools operated by the San Diego County Office of Education for students transitioning between the local school districts and SDCOE Schools including the SOAR Academies. The student support technician team with support of school counselors implement highly personalized student plan placements; broker opportunities and facilitate post-secondary educational placements; maintain student records and reporting of transition outcomes; and develop and maintain a program-wide, formalized system of accountability that is in line with state standards. Our transition staff also collaborate with school counselors for the purpose of

developing and providing college, career and citizenship readiness experiences as well as ensure a coordinated court and community effort for admissions, placement, exit and transition process for our students.

One of Probation's goals this year is to enhance family engagement and transition services. We are utilizing our Senior Probation Officers, who have casework experience, in this role. We agree that frequent, positive connections to the community are a key to the youths' success.

RESPONSE #3d: Many students at Kearny Mesa participate in integrated project based instruction. This type of instruction is similar to that of High Tech High School and Del Largo Academy in Escondido, California, which are among the best high schools in our country.

SOAR Kearny Mesa seeks to assist our students to compete globally and become engaged citizens in their communities. To that end, instruction is based in the interrelated competencies of mastering rigorous academic content, critical thinking, problem solving, working collaboratively, communicate effectively, directing one's own learning and develop an academic mindset in which each student believes that they have the ability to grow and think.

In order for our students to engage in our instructional focus – Talking + Critical Thinking = Deep Understanding of the content, teachers engage our students using the following educational evidence based strategies based upon John Hattie's work regarding effective instructional practices:

- Learning Target- We tell our students what they will be learning and what strategies the class will be use in order to engage in the learning
- Success Criteria- Teachers clarify what we want our students to know and be able to do at the end of each lesson
- Questioning Strategies that check for understanding
- Graphic organizers
- Multiple opportunities for practice
- Provide clear meaningful feedback in order to affirm successes and in what areas the student may need to improve
- Work together in groups
- Metacognition- Students need to be aware of the strategies they could use, select strategies that they will use to monitor their effectiveness, and then apply alternative strategies as necessary.

KMJDF offers a variety of cost-effective, evidence-based programs and we will continue to evaluate appropriate programs for implementation.

RECOMMENDATION #4: "Telephone access:

Discussion with staff and youth revealed unclear telephone usage policies for boys and girls with parents or caregivers who reside outside of the country. One young female indicated that she hadn't spoken with her mother in weeks because she has an out-of-country telephone number. Conversations with staff indicated one telephone in the facility that can make out-of-country calls, but that youth don't have regular or consistent access to it like they do the public payphones. To ensure equitable access, the Juvenile Justice Commission recommends creating policies and procedures that address regular contact with parents and caregivers who have out-of-country telephone numbers."

RESPONSE #4: Probation has a policy regarding using the telephone for both in-country and out-of-country calls. For both types of calls, the policy allows for a minimum of one call per week. Additional use of the telephone is allowed based upon behavior and availability.

RECOMMENDATION #5: "Critical Incident Reports and STAT Team:

"Review of the Critical Incident Reports revealed inconsistency in the use of the STAT Team during apparent mental health crises. The current reporting procedures do not clearly indicate when the STAT team is contacted or dispatched to assist youth during these critical moments. The Juvenile Justice Commission recommends altering current reporting procedures to specifically detail when the team is contacted, when they arrive and when they intend to follow-up with the youth."

RESPONSE #5: Probation and Behavioral Health Services work very closely together to ensure the needs of the youth are addressed at KMJDF. Probation is responsible for the reporting of incidents via incident reports. Documenting STAT Team's involvement in the incident reports could provide additional information on the assistance provided and the collaboration that occurred. Probation will use staff briefings to emphasize the importance of including this information in reports.

RECOMMENDATION #6: "LGBTQI Programming:

Consider adding LGBTQI specific services and partnering with The Center in Hillcrest to provide those youths who identify with that community with some support while in custody. The Center could also be asked to provide training to staff on how to help kids who identify as LGBTQI."

RESPONSE #6: We have reached out to The Center in Hillcrest in the past to provide services at our institutions. We believe LGBTQI specific services are valuable and will look into adding them to our program.

Thank you for this opportunity to respond to the Juvenile Justice Commission 2017 Facility Inspection Report for Kearny Mesa Juvenile Detention Facility.

Very respectfully,



ADOLFO GONZALES
CHIEF PROBATION OFFICER

C: Rueben Littlejohn, Assistant Chief Probation Officer
Scott Huizar, Deputy Chief of Institutional Services
Timothy Hancock, Division Chief, Kearny Mesa Juvenile Detention Facility

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