



## **PLACER COUNTY GRAND JURY**

# **Placer County Juvenile Detention Facility**

**Annual Inspection**

June 26, 2015

# Placer County Juvenile Detention Facility

## Annual Inspection

### Summary

The 2014 - 2015 Placer County Grand Jury conducted its annual inspection of the County Juvenile Detention Facility (JDF) on October 15, 2014, followed by an interview with the JDF Superintendent on October 30, 2015. The facility is located at 11260 B Avenue, Auburn.

On the date of inspection, the JDF appeared to be clean and well-maintained; the staff is knowledgeable about pertinent legal requirements and genuinely dedicated to reducing the rate of return/repeat offenders. However the facility offers short-term counseling and self-help programs that are not ideally suited for detainees who are held at the JDF for extended periods of time. Similarly lacking is availability of outdoor recreation geared toward longer-termed detainees. Activities primarily consist of a concrete sports court with a few barred openings in the walls and a small open-air skylight. Although the facility has a large grassy area, it is rarely used due to limited security and staffing issues.

Finally, the JDF has incorporated a program which has been favorably received by the detainees. Positive Behavioral Intervention Support (PBIS)<sup>1</sup> is a program wherein detainees can earn privileges and/or small luxury items through a merit system, based on good behavior and following the rules of the JDF. As reported by staff, PBIS has led to a decrease in poor behavioral incidents at the facility.

The Grand Jury added three additional areas of interest to its inspection agenda:

- A status update on implementation of policies and procedures mandated by the Department of Justice's final rule pursuant to the Prison Rape Elimination Act of 2003<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Positive Behavior Intervention Support is a program developed by the University of Oregon with support from University of North Carolina "to establish the social culture and behavioral supports needed for a school to be an effective learning environment for all students."

<sup>2</sup> Prison Rape Elimination Act of 2003 (PREA): PREA is federal legislation requiring all prison and detention facilities to comply with new federal standards specified in regulations implementing the National Standards to prevent, detect, and respond to prison rape. In March 2012, the Department of Justice issued a final rule adopting national standards to prevent, detect, and respond to prison rape.

- Policies and procedures at the JDF
- A status update on detainees access to the grass area

## **Background**

The Placer County Grand Jury is mandated to inspect all jails and holding facilities in Placer County. As part of the inspections, the Grand Jury also includes the JDF, a detention facility for juveniles eighteen (18) years of age and younger. The JDF is operated by the Placer County Probation Department in accordance with California Code of Regulations, Title 15, and Section 5; Welfare and Institutions Code Section 210, and Juvenile Court law.

## **Investigation Methods**

The Grand Jury familiarized themselves with California Code of Regulations, Minimum Standards for Juvenile Facilities Title 15 effective April 1, 2014 and the Prison Rape Elimination Act (PREA) National Standards for Juvenile Detention Facilities.

The Grand Jury conducted an on-site inspection of the JDF facilities led by the JDF Superintendent. The Grand Jury also interviewed the on-site JDF nurse. In addition to observations made during the course of the inspection, the Grand Jury utilized a JDF Inspection checklist.

## **Facts**

During the inspection the Grand Jury was informed of or observed the following:

- The JDF had twenty-four (24) detainees, fourteen (14) in the general population and ten (10) in maximum-security. The JDF has a maximum capacity of 78 juveniles, and has yet to exceed that capacity.
- The average stay for detainees varies from days to weeks. However, several detainees had been at the facility for a period of months. One detainee has been held in maximum security for two (2) years and is expected to remain there at least another year.

- Detainees have limited access to direct sunlight and fresh air. The JDF has a cement sport court, with a small opening in the roof for sunlight and air that detainees can access on a daily basis. Detainees in the general population also have periodic access to a small garden area.
- A large grass outdoor area is not available for use by detainees in maximum security and is seldom used by detainees in the general population because of perceived security risks caused by the open chain-link fencing and large size of the area. The chain-link, which is not covered with slats, is open to people outside the detention facility who could pass contraband to the detainees. Despite the presence of razor wire, JDF staff believes there is a credible risk of a detainee scaling the fence to escape. In addition, it was reported that the large size of the grass field makes it difficult to adequately supervise the detainees with current staffing levels.
- There are on-site anger management classes, drug and alcohol counseling, and a journal writing program that repeat on a regular basis. Detainees who are at the JDF for an extended period of time repeat the classes.
- The JDF has social awareness programs and have implemented a merit plan, Positive Behavior Intervention Support, where detainees earn additional privileges for good behavior and following rules.
- Because the JDF has excess capacity, it has converted one housing unit into classroom and storage space.
- The staff ratios meet California State requirements of 1 to 10 during the day and 1 to 30 during sleeping hours.
- Some staff members are multi-lingual. In addition, a language translation phone line is available as needed.
- Staff is diverse relative to gender, race and ethnicity.
- All health and fire inspections are current.

- Food service is provided by the South Placer Jail kitchen and delivered to the JDF daily. Special dietary requirements for medical conditions, allergies, or religious beliefs are accommodated. The kitchen (reheating) area was clean.
- Meals are served in the dayroom, not the cafeteria.
- A nurse is on site from 7am to 7pm, seven days a week.
- A doctor visits two days per week.
- All current prescriptions for incoming detainees are reviewed and evaluated by the JDF Doctor. The JDF Doctor may consult with the detainee's physician and parents to determine the requirement for these medications. If the JDF Doctor authorizes the medication, it is delivered to the facility by the parents. The JDF Doctor has the final decision on whether to issue any medication.
- Psychiatric services are available on site and via video conferencing. Incoming mail is opened and checked for contraband, but not routinely read by staff.
- Instructional staff consists of two accredited teachers, one non-accredited teacher and a special education teacher.
- School supplies are available and appear adequate.
- School programs appear to comply with state education code requirements.
- General Education Development (GED) preparation is available.
- Religious programs are provided on a voluntary basis.
- Interior of buildings were clean and well maintained; however the floor of one maximum security cell and some desks in the classroom/lunchroom had graffiti carved into them.
- The JDF has not experienced a PREA audit. Their policies and procedures appear to comply with requirements; all detainees sign a PREA contract when entering the facility; PREA related phone numbers are posted; and PREA calls are free.
- The detainees have access to a pay phone with a list of reference numbers posted.

- A confidential grievance box is mounted on the wall in the dayroom.

## Findings

The Grand Jury found that:

- F1. The JDF was clean and well maintained.
- F2. The design of the outdoor grass area at the JDF facility is inherently flawed.
- F3. The JDF Staff exhibited a good rapport with the detainees. They have implemented a merit/point system and their focus is preparing the detainees for release with a view to minimizing the recidivism rate.
- F4. The JDF Staff appear to run a good program for detainees who are there for a short time (i.e., days to weeks). However, certain aspects of the program, namely the repetition of class offerings and limited access to the grass field could be detrimental to detainees held for a longer period of time (i.e., months to years).
- F5. The JDF Staff stated that serving food in the dayroom rather than the cafeteria saves time, and limits security risks caused by traveling back and forth. This procedure also allows detainees more time to eat in a more relaxed atmosphere.

## Conclusion

The Grand Jury found the JDF to be clean, well maintained, and well-staffed with trained personnel.

## Recommendations

The Grand Jury recommends that the Juvenile Detention Facility:

- R1. Seek funding from the Placer County Executive office to address the fencing security and staffing issues relating to the use of the grassy outdoor area.
- R2. Provide additional behavior and social development classes for detainees who have already taken the basic courses.

## Request for Responses:

	<u>Recommendations Requiring Response</u>	<u>Response Due Date</u>
<b>Mr. Marshall Hopper</b> Chief Probation Officer Placer County Probation Department 2929 Richardson Drive, Suite B Auburn, CA 95603	<b>R1, R2</b>	<b>August 24, 2015</b>
<b>Mr. David Boesch</b> Placer County CEO 175 Fulweiler Ave. Auburn, CA 95603	<b>R1</b>	<b>August 24, 2015</b>

## Copies Sent To:

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