



SOLANO COUNTY GRAND JURY

2015 - 2016

Solano County

Juvenile Detention Facility Complex

SOLANO COUNTY

JUVENILE DETENTION FACILITY COMPLEX

I. SUMMARY

The 2015-2016 Solano County Grand Jury visited the Juvenile Detention Facility Complex on November 20, 2015 concentrating on the following:

- The educational opportunities
- Programs available, Internal and External
- Review the control panel monitoring surveillance system
- The current all call/intercom system

II. INTRODUCTION

The California Penal Code section 919 subdivision (b) provides, “The Grand Jury shall inquire into the conditions and management of the public prisons within the county”. Pursuant to the statute, the 2015-2016 Grand Jury inspected the Solano County Juvenile Detention Facility Complex (JDFC).

The JDFC operates under the auspices of the Solano County Probation Department, and is located at 740 Beck Avenue, in the City of Fairfield California. There are three separate units within the 120- bed facility including the Juvenile Detention Facility (JDF), New Foundations (NF), and the Challenge Academy (CA).

The JDFC population includes males and females. At the time of the Grand Jury’s visit there were 41 minors in the JDF, 15 minors in the NF and 12 minors in the CA. The staff of the JDFC has a total of 63 allocated Staff Group Counselors operating on rotating shifts. There are currently, five Senior Group Counselors and five Supervising Group Counselors. Medical staff is also available at the facility on a 24 hour basis. At the time of our tour there were 8 open positions.

The JDF is a locked facility with a capacity of 68 beds for juveniles who have been arrested and are awaiting court proceedings or for convicted juvenile offenders who have been sentenced by the Court. The average stay for juveniles in the JDF is 17 days. Juveniles can be kept up to the age of 18 at which time he/she is transferred to the County Jail. A minor who attains the age of 18 while in custody, may continue to be housed at juvenile hall until he or she turns 19.

The New Foundations (NF) program is a 15-bed unit within the JDFC. Juveniles who have been sentenced by the Court may be placed in NF for up to 120 days. NF focuses on family reunification, drug and alcohol abuse intervention.

The all- male Challenge Academy (CA) program is a 20-bed unit also located within the facility. CA is a program that provides the necessary skills, education and training to assist the participants in changing their negative thinking and behavior. It helps prepare them for family reunification and re-entry into the community.

Programs in all of the units consist of general academic education, anger management, self – esteem building, self-discipline and personal accountability. Programs also address improving communication skills and behavior modification. Staff stated they are always looking into new programs to achieve these objectives.

III. METHODOLOGY

Reviewed:

- The California Penal Code section 919 subdivision (b).
- Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation, Division of Juvenile Justice, Title 15.

Tour of the Juvenile Detention Facility Complex:

- Juvenile Detention Facility (JDF)
- New Foundation (NF)
- Challenge Academy (CA)
- Medical Center
- Outdoor Recreational Areas

Interviewed:

- Juvenile Detention Facility Staff on duty
- Educational Personnel
- Several residents
- Supervisory Counselors
- Medical Staff

IV. STATEMENT OF FACTS

The Juvenile Institutions Division is responsible for the operation of the county's Juvenile Detention Facility. The Juvenile Institutions Division's goal for the JDFC is to provide a short-term residential treatment program that meets the California Code of Regulations, Title 15, and Minimum Standards for Juvenile Facilities. It strives to maintain an environment that is conducive to initiating and motivating individual cognitive changes, providing a schedule of constructive and satisfying personal development, physical and educational programs and minimizing negative effects of detention while in their custody. Every minor is cared for in a manner that reduces anxiety and maximizes the potential for personal growth, maturity and development.

Previous Grand Jury reports indicated that the trend for both misdemeanor and felony arrests of Solano County youth shows a yearly decline since 2006. The trend now reflects an increase in juveniles being arrested for more serious offenses and are being tried as adults. Also noted at the time of the tour, the stay in the facility for juveniles being tried as adults may be longer, due to the time for court trials.

A large number of first-time offenders are diverted from Juvenile Hall at the local law enforcement level, e.g., cite and release. Juvenile Justice System Diversion and early intervention are important aspects of the Solano County's juvenile justice continuum. If the diversion program is unsuccessful, the case is referred to the District Attorney.

In partnership with the District Attorney's office, the Probation Department has operated a Felony Diversion Program since 2006. The goal of the program is to provide intensive early intervention services to minors with felony arrests in an effort to divert them from the juvenile court system and future delinquency. An individualized treatment plan is developed with the youth and his/her family, and services are offered for a period of up to six months.

The New Foundations program has been in operation since 1996 and continues to provide substance abuse treatment services to youths. The population currently at 15 beds allows a more focused approach in addressing those youths who abuse drugs and/or alcohol. The program length averages four months, which includes family reunification efforts during the last phase.

The Challenge Academy Program opened in 2014 and serves as a secure commitment program for males 15 – 17 years of age. The Challenge Academy serves up to 20 individuals. The program is nine months in length. While in the program, youths receive mental health

counseling, vocational workshops through the Solano County Office of Education, and can participate in a Restorative Justice program. In addition, they work with community based organizations and businesses for vocational training and community services opportunities.

During our tour of the Challenge Academy Facility, it was noted that it was the oldest building in the complex and is in need of some significant upgrades or maintenance.

Upon arrival at the Juvenile Detention Facility, offenders are processed and the following is completed:

- Booking Information
- Health screening
- Custody assessment classification
- Property recorded
- Orientation
- Visitation rules
- Shower required for hygiene
- Issuance of clothing
- Prison Rape Elimination Act Training

During our tour of the facility, we visited the Control Room. Control Room staff has the responsibility to monitor all movements in the facility, opening all of the doors and monitoring cameras throughout the facility. There are currently 128 cameras located throughout the complex. Watching all of the cameras at the same time is difficult due to the limited number of monitors.

Staff indicated a control panel monitor system upgrade, called a “call up button”, could be added to the current control panel to assist the Control Room staff in the event of an emergency. The call up button upgrade would help to identify camera locations, assist with doors that need to be opened and identify persons coming in or going out more rapidly. The Control Room is staffed 24 hours a day and the recordings are digitally stored for one year.

The current all call intercom system provides general and emergency information throughout the entire complex. It also has the ability to isolate communication to a specific area as needed. The current system has a time restriction on messaging which could have a negative impact in an emergency. Upgrading the system will eliminate the deficiencies in the current system.

Educational areas are available within each unit. A state approved Common Core Standards has been implemented throughout the facility. The Solano County Office of Education certifies all programs and educators as mandated by the state. There are four core subjects: English, Mathematics, Social Studies and Science. This allows the students to earn a high school diploma or a General Education Development (GED) equivalency certificate.

A typical classroom has 15 students, one teacher and one para-educator. A screening process is used to identify students requiring an Individual Educational Plan. In addition, there is an Accelerated Credit Accumulation program available, based upon self-study that allows earned credits to be transferred to a traditional high school.

Prevention Resources

There are a number of prevention resources offered at the facility. There are several community-based programs that have been implemented and are well received. These are some of the programs:

- Alcoholics Anonymous
- Narcotics Anonymous
- Planned Parenthood
- AIDS Awareness
- Religious services
- Youth mentoring
- Solano Community College Interns
- Motivational speakers

V. FINDING AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Finding 1 – While touring the Control Room it was observed that not all of the 128 cameras are able to be monitored at one time. The staff has to locate the area of need on the panel and bring that camera up to identify the person entering or exiting. A call-up button could be added to the current control panel, assisting the Control Room staff in identifying the needs more quickly.

Recommendation 1 - Upgrade the control panel in the Control Room with a call-up button.

Finding 2 – The all call intercom system throughout the complex needs to be upgraded.

Recommendation 2 – Upgrade the current all call intercom system throughout the complex.

Finding 3 – The Challenge Academy Facility, the oldest building in the complex, needs maintenance and upgrades.

Recommendation 3 – Upgrade the current facility and perform maintenance as needed: painting, lighting, furniture, and replace interior and exterior doors to accommodate a key card system.

Comment:

The 2015-2016 Grand Jury was very impressed with the overall cleanliness, educational opportunities and professional attitude of the facility personnel. The Grand Jury would also like to thank the staff representatives that assisted us on our tour of the facility.

REQUIRED RESPONSES

- Solano County Probation Department

COURTESY COPIES

- Clerk of the Solano County Board of Supervisors
- Manager, Juvenile Detention Facility Complex