



SOLANO COUNTY GRAND JURY
2019-2020

JUVENILE DETENTION FACILITY COMPLEX

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I. SUMMARY

California Penal Code §919(b) provides that the Civil Grand Jury shall inquire into the condition and management of public prisons within the county. Pursuant to the Penal Code and to follow up on past grand jury reports, the 2019-2020 Solano County Civil Grand Jury toured and inquired into the operation of the Solano County Juvenile Detention Facility Complex (JDFC). Of particular interest were the facility usage, the surveillance system, the progress in updating the “Institutional Module” and the vocational and academic programs. The Grand Jury found the upgrading of the surveillance system and the “Institutional Module” has yet to be completed. The JDFC Administration has addressed most of the recommendations of past Grand Jury reports.

II. INTRODUCTION

The Solano County Juvenile Detention Facility Complex, under the jurisdiction of the Probation Department, provides short-term residential placement and treatment for youth in the juvenile justice system. The locked facility is located at 740 Beck Ave., Fairfield, California. JDFC Staff reported that in Fiscal Year 2018-2019, 353 youths were booked into the facility. Juveniles arrested for lesser crimes are placed into diversion programs outside of the JDFC. The complex has a maximum capacity of 138 juveniles but, on the day of the Grand Jury’s tour there were only 43 youths at the facility. The 2019-2020 Solano Grand Jury reviewed the procedures and changes made within the system since the 2016-2017 Grand Jury report.

III. METHODOLOGY

Toured:

Juvenile Detention Facility Complex

Interviewed:

JDFC Administrators

JDFC Staff

JDFC Juvenile residents

Solano County Office of Education Staff

Reviewed:

2010-2011 Grand Jury Report

2012-2013 Grand Jury Report

2014-2015 Grand Jury Report

2016-2017 Grand Jury Report

Article concerning Senate Bill 889

IV. STATEMENT OF FACTS

JDFC staff endeavors to create an environment conducive to initiating and motivating individual changes promoting positive personal development and educational growth, while minimizing the negative effects of detention.

The effectiveness of the personal development and motivational programs was evident when the Grand Jury met a large group of the detained juveniles. They were polite and engaging while maintaining eye contact and shaking hands. The encounter included a voluntary piano solo performed by one of the juveniles. In addition, the juveniles individually shared their learning experiences with the Grand Jury.

The JDFC has a maximum housing capacity of 138 juveniles who have been arrested for felony crimes. On the date of the Grand Jury's visit there were only 43 youths incarcerated. During Fiscal Year 2018-2019, 353 juveniles were processed; 282 males and 71 females including 162 African-American (46%), 94 Hispanic (27%) and 56 Caucasian (18%).

At the time of the Grand Jury tour, JDFC had the following positions:

- forty-one of fifty-two allocated group counselors
- five of six allocated senior counselors
- five of six allocated supervising group counselors

One supervisor is on long-term medical leave and one supervisor applicant is in the hiring process.

In addition, there are four on-call temporary staff positions that are utilized as necessary. The people on-call either work in similar positions in other counties or are former employees with the needed skills. The temporary help is paid from the "extra help" budget and according to County mandates is only permitted to work 20 hours per week. When the extra help pool of workers is not available, current employees are mandated to fill absences and are paid at a time-and-a-half overtime rate.

Incoming juveniles to the JDFC receive an initial screening for both medical and mental health issues. The youths are asked to provide their gender and pronoun preferences and are processed and housed according to JDFC protocols. This procedure seems to be in response to prior Grand Jury reports. The Department of Mental Health is notified when evaluations indicate assistance is required.

The JDFC staff uses a Behavior Management System which enables the juveniles to earn points that may be redeemed for snacks or time in the incentive recreation room. When behavior requires modification, the juvenile is given a five-minute cool down period. If the behavior is "acceptable" at the end of the cool down period the juvenile is returned to regular activities.

When a youth requires a more significant behavioral intervention (when cool down is ineffective, or the behavior continues escalating towards a potential safety issue) a Reflective Self-Analysis tool is implemented. It is cognitive-based and staff-intensive.

The more volatile youths are separated into an interview room for a 30-minute cool down period. If they have not cooled down, they are sent to room confinement for up to four hours. The JDFC staff evaluates the confined youths every 30 minutes to evaluate their behavior. If they are still “hot” after the four-hour confinement period, mental health counselors are brought in to provide support.

The JDFC offers skill development programs to benefit youths upon their release. Vocational and academic programs offered include: construction trades, master gardener program, basic information technology and online high school and college courses.

As a locked facility, JDFC requires an effective tracking and security system. The surveillance system, which is monitored in the control room, has been upgraded to video record all areas of the facility, but the storage capacity of recordings is not large enough to store one year’s worth of data. A contract has been awarded to address entry and paging deficiencies and expand video file storage to record 18 months of activity. The tracking and documentation system, the “Institutional Module” is a computer program used to document, track and organize statistical information on incidents within the facility. The 2012-2013 Grand Jury report on the facility recommended the “Institutional Module” be upgraded. That recommendation was reasserted by the 2016-2017 Grand Jury report. In 2019, the Grand Jury was informed that the “Institutional Module” is being rolled out in phases. The projected completion date of May 2020 has been effected by the COVID-19 pandemic.

COMMENTS

The 2019-2020 Solano County Civil Grand Jury recognizes the Juvenile Detention Facility Complex Administration continues to address recommendations noted in previous Grand Jury reports. The Grand Jury looks forward to the Administration prioritizing completion of the “Institutional Module” for tracking and security at the facility.

COURTESY COPIES

Solano County Board of Supervisors
Solano County Chief Probation Officer
Solano County Juvenile Detention Facility Complex Administration
Solano County District Attorney
Solano County Office of Education

This is an informational report. No response is required