

Juvenile Hall Update

The Mendocino County Juvenile Hall (Hall) has implemented several recommendations from Grand Jury Final Reports for the two previous years; however, the Hall still needs additional mental health staff support, action on various maintenance deficiencies, completion of the recreation yard, and more planning and programs to prevent recidivism.

Method of Investigation

The Grand Jury inspected the Hall in October 2000. In April 2001, the Grand Jury visited again and spoke with incarcerated youth during lunch. The Grand Jury interviewed the Hall Superintendent and Assistant Superintendent and reviewed written information given to parents of incarcerated youth, the Hall's daily schedule, and the public Juvenile Justice Delinquency and Prevention Commission (Commission) annual Facility Inspection Report (Facility Inspection Report).

Background Information

The Hall, under the direction of the Department of Probation, provides for the physical and emotional care of incarcerated youth in the County pursuant to the California Code of Regulations, Juvenile Facilities, Title 15, and Building Standards, Title 24.

All incarcerated youth attend West Hills School, a Court School provided by the Mendocino County Office of Education.

The 1997-98, 1998-99, and 1999-2000 Grand Juries reported violations of the State regulations for juvenile halls regarding lack of recreation time and lack of hair care. Recommendations included developing unused space next to the Hall for additional recreation activities, implementing additional programs to promote social awareness and reduce recidivism, and notifying parents of the high cost of collect calls from the Hall.

In May 2000, a new wing that houses intake and youth accused of violent offenses (Code 3 youth) was completed. With the new intake facilities, youth can be admitted to the Hall without locking all youths in cells as previously was necessary. The general Hall population and Code 3 youth are now separated for all activities, including school, eating, and recreation. Code 3 youth use outdoor recreation facilities when not in use by the general population and have a separate classroom and common room.

Findings

1. The Hall is run in an orderly manner.

Response (Probation): We agree with this finding.

Response (Board of Supervisors): The Board agrees with this finding.

2. **The Superintendent's response to the 1999-2000 Grand Jury report indicated that he was seeking program providers to implement programs designed to promote social awareness and reduce recidivism. Programs now provided:**
 - a. **Narcotics Anonymous and Alcoholics Anonymous conduct programs on Monday and Thursday evenings.**
 - b. **The County Department of Mental Health Services (Mental Health) worker provides an evening meditation group.**

No other new programs were reported.

Response (Probation): We agree in part with this finding. The Juvenile Staff is always seeking new and different programs to promote healthier children. In addition to the programs mentioned in the Grand Jury report, we have Alcohol and Other Drugs programs, Reality Awareness, Aerobics, and Project Sanctuary Battered Women's programs.

Response (Mental Health): Mental Health agrees with this finding.

Response (Board of Supervisors): The Board agrees with the response provided by the Chief Probation Officer. Juvenile Hall has added to the programs outlined by the Grand Jury to promote social awareness and reduce recidivism.

3. **A gardening area is available for youth. A volunteer helps with gardening efforts. In October the area was not being used. In April, youth reported that onions are now growing in one of the raised beds. The area is underused.**

Response (Probation): We disagree with this finding. The Grand Jury visited between garden seasons. Presently the garden is flourishing and the vegetables are being served in the Hall kitchen. We hope to expand the garden area next year.

Response (Board of Supervisors): The Board agrees with the response provided by the Chief Probation Officer. The garden is well used and provided fresh vegetables to the youth.

4. **The Facility Inspection Report notes the need for additional treatment planning for incarcerated youth:**

Because time in the hall gives agencies the time and opportunity to intensively address the needs of these youth, an effort to coordinate interagency evaluation of the individuals educational, emotional, physical,

and social needs and the concomitant development of a treatment and discharge plan.

Agencies that have the opportunity to evaluate incarcerated youth and provide services are the Department of Probation, Mental Health, Alcohol and other Drugs Program, and the Mendocino County Office of Education.

Response (Probation): We agree with this finding. Treatment planning is a multi-agency function.

Response (Board of Supervisors): The Board agrees with this finding.

- 5. The Facility Inspection Report states that “although the school staff and the juvenile hall staff serve the same population and face many of the same challenges, there have been no cross training opportunities.” The Commission recommended that “the Juvenile Hall Administration and the principal of Juvenile Hall high school hold joint training” for Hall staff and the West Hills School staff.**

Response (Probation): We agree with this finding.

Response (Board of Supervisors): The Board agrees with this finding.

- 6. Mental Health provides a one-half time Clinician daily, Monday to Friday. The Clinician sees individuals and conducts group therapy. The Superintendent states that during times when the Hall is at or near capacity, additional Mental Health services, approximately 10 hours per week are needed.**

Response (Probation): We agree with this finding.

Response (Mental Health): Juvenile Hall contracts with the Mental Health Department to provide these clinical services. Back up staff is available to substitute if the regular clinician is not available. Psychiatric services are also provided under this contract. As Juvenile Hall contracts and pays for Mental Health services as they deem necessary, Mental Health is always open to negotiating the terms of contracts to add services.

Response (Board of Supervisors): The Board agrees with this finding.

- 7. If requested by youths, haircuts are now provided. A staff person is a licensed cosmetologist and provides the services every two weeks. Youth reported that the system is working and that those who request haircuts get them in a timely manner.**

No evidence of a hair care procedure was presented if a licensed cosmetologist staff person is not available to provide hair care.

Response (Probation): With the exception of informing the Grand Jury that we have a licensed cosmetologist on staff that performs hair care, it is unclear what is missing from our hair care program.

Response (Board of Supervisors): The Board agrees with the response provided by the Chief Probation Officer.

- 8. Previous inspections reported the need for lights in an outside caged recreation area. The Superintendent reported that lights have been installed, allowing youths to exercise in the evenings.**

Response (Probation): We agree with this finding.

Response (Board of Supervisors): The Board agrees with this finding.

- 9. The Superintendent's response to the 1999-2000 Grand Jury report states, "Recreation area is being developed, using the labor and energy of incarcerated and work program youth."**
- a. In October, the Superintendent testified that the fenced area South of the Hall was scheduled for completion by summer 2001 as a recreation area, but as of May 2001, site work had not started.**
 - b. In April, the Superintendent reported that completed plans include paved and grassy exercise areas, a gravel perimeter track, and restroom. Because of drainage problems, additional grading, fill dirt, and topsoil were required, changing the estimated cost from \$10,000 to \$32,000.**
 - c. The Superintendent has had difficulty getting bids from contractors for the work; only one was received.**
 - d. Funds are available from the Criminal Justice Improvement Fund this year and next year, which will pay for the recreation improvements. One local service organization has offered to help.**

Response (Probation): We agree with this finding.

Response (General Services): The Department agrees with this finding (a, b, and d).

Response (Board of Supervisors): The Board agrees with this finding. The area is scheduled to be completed this Fiscal Year.

- 10. In October, the Grand Jury observed that the cafeteria needed painting and had worn and discolored drapes. The Superintendent reported that he had requested painting and blinds to replace the drapes. In April, these items were not completed.**

Response (Probation): We agree with this finding.

Response (General Services): The Department disagrees in part with this finding because the Buildings and Grounds Division had not received a formal request, in the form of a Work Order, from the Juvenile Hall Superintendent for these projects.

Response (Board of Supervisors): The Board agrees with this finding. The area is scheduled to be completed this Fiscal Year.

- 11. Previously, weekly parent visits were in the boys' recreation room. They are now held in the dreary cafeteria. The boys' recreation room is equipped with couch-like plastic seats, television, books, magazines, and two vending machines.**

Response (Probation): We agree with this finding.

Response (Board of Supervisors): The Board agrees with this finding.

- 12. When visits were in the boys' recreation room, parents could purchase items from vending machines for themselves or their children. With a move to the cafeteria those machines are not available.**

a. Youth suggested that the vending machines should be moved either to the cafeteria or outside the cafeteria so parents could once again purchase items during visits.

b. Youth reported they are not allowed to use the vending machines located in the recreation room; they are now used for staff only.

Response (Probation): We agree with this finding.

Response (General Services): The Department agrees with this finding.

Response (Board of Supervisors): The Board agrees with this finding.

- 13. Parents are now informed in an informational pamphlet that calls made from youth at the Hall "are 'collect' and charged at a premium rate." "Premium rate" does not clearly state the actual cost of the calls. Youth from Fort Bragg reported that calls to home cost parents \$3.00 per minute. Ukiah youth reported that the charges are not as high for their parents. A private communications provider provides services.**

Response (Probation): We agree with this finding.

Response (Board of Supervisors): The Board agrees with this finding.

Recommendations

- A. Hall administration continue to seek additional programs that promote social awareness and reduce recidivism, such as victim awareness, conflict resolution, and self-esteem building. (Finding 2)**

Response (Probation): Already implemented, in that this is a continuous process of programming.

Response (Board of Supervisors): The Board agrees with the response provided by the Chief Probation Officer.

- B. Hall administration make more use of the gardening area and contact community gardening groups for assistance. (Finding 3)**

Response (Probation): Already implemented, in that the garden is being used regularly during growing seasons.

Response (Board of Supervisors): The Board agrees with the response provided by the Chief Probation Officer.

- C. The Department of Probation, Mental Health, Alcohol and other Drugs Program, and the Mendocino County Office of Education develop a plan to provide social-emotional programs and discharge planning for incarcerated youth. (Finding 5)**

Response (Probation): Already implemented, in that such programs are a continuous part of the Hall program.

Response (Mental Health): Agree. Within the next year MHD will review this recommendation with these agencies.

Response (Board of Supervisors): The Board agrees with the response provided by the Chief Probation Officer.

Response (Mendocino County Office of Education Board of Trustees): *No legal response received by deadline.*

Response (Mendocino County Superintendent of Schools): *No legal response received by deadline.*

- D. Mendocino County Office of Education and the Department of Probation sponsor coordinated training for West Hills School staff and the Hall staff to ensure social- emotional educational services are provided. (Finding 2, 4, 5)**

Response (Probation): Already implemented, in that Juvenile Hall and MCOE staff meet weekly to discuss the socio-emotional and educational, and share practices and developmental concepts that cross train each to the needs of the other. This has been a practice for several years.

Response (Board of Supervisors): The Board agrees with the response provided by the Chief Probation Officer. This recommendation has already been implemented.

Response (Mendocino County Office of Education Board of Trustees): *No legal response received by deadline.*

Response (Mendocino County Superintendent of Schools): *No legal response received by deadline.*

E. Hall administration and Mental Health assess the need for more Clinician services at peak times of need and reassign Mental Health staff to the Hall as needed. (Finding 4, 6)

Response (Probation): Already implemented, in that this is recognized and dealt with at the times most needed.

Response (Mental Health): Disagree. Juvenile Hall purchases services from the Mental Health Department. Mental Health will work cooperatively with Hall administration to evaluate their need for additional services and amend contract provisions and payment terms to add new clinical services to the Hall. Mental Health staff cannot be removed from current duties and reassigned to the Hall, as this would create lack of services elsewhere in the County.

Response (Board of Supervisors): The Board agrees with the response provided by the Chief Probation Officer. Mental Health staff is available for Juvenile Hall when needed.

F. Hall administration develop a written policy for providing hair care. (Finding 7)

Response (Probation): Already implemented, in that we have a cosmetologist on staff. It is unclear what is missing from our hair care program.

Response (Board of Supervisors): The Board agrees with the response provided by the Chief Probation Officer.

G. The Board of Supervisors direct General Services to help the Hall complete the recreation area as soon as possible so that it can be used this summer. The

Superintendent extend outreach to other community service groups for possible support in developing this area. (Finding 9)

Response (Probation): Already implemented. General Services has been responsive to our needs. Each year money is set aside for the development of the recreation yard. The Superintendent has approached local services for assistance, and will continue to do so. Manpower has been more available than monetary contributions.

Response (General Services): The Department agrees with this recommendation, and has requested \$13,000 in BU 1710 (Capital Improvements) in the Fiscal Year 2001-2002 Proposed Budget from the Criminal Justice Improvement Fund for completion of the project. As soon as the final budget has been approved by the Board of Supervisors, Buildings and Grounds will coordinate with the Juvenile Hall Superintendent to complete the project.

Response (Board of Supervisors): The Board agrees with the response provided by the Chief Probation Officer. Juvenile Hall staff works closely with Buildings and Grounds on the recreational yard project and has approached the local community for assistance.

H. General Services order blinds for the cafeteria and paint the cafeteria. (Finding 10)

Response (Probation): Already implemented. General Services has work orders for blinds and painting.

Response (General Services): The Department agrees with this recommendation, and intends to paint the cafeteria and replace the blinds in the cafeteria expeditiously upon receipt of a formal Work Order for these projects from the Juvenile Hall Superintendent.

Response (Board of Supervisors): The Board agrees with the response provided by the Chief Probation Officer. Buildings and Grounds has placed this project on the list for completion this Fiscal Year.

I. If the Hall staff decision remains to disallow use of vending machines for parent visits, and youth are not allowed to use the machines, remove or relocate the machines to a staff room. (Finding 12)

Response (Probation): Requires further study. Juvenile Hall agrees that having the vending machines on the Boy's Unit serves no good purpose. It is the intention to relocate the machines to an area they can be utilized so that parents may purchase goods for the youth. Relocating the vending machines has been explored, but logistical issues need to be worked out.

Response (General Services): The Department agrees with this recommendation, subject to the decision of the Juvenile Hall Superintendent. Upon the request of the Juvenile Hall Superintendent, General Services will work expeditiously with the vending machine contractor to ensure that the vending machines are relocated.

Response (Board of Supervisors): The Board agrees with the response provided by the Chief Probation Officer. Relocation of the vending machines needs further study.

J. Hall staff renegotiate the contract with the private communications provider to ensure that calling costs from youth to parents are the same throughout the County and inform parents of actual costs. (Finding 13)

Response (Probation): Requires further study. Recently the private communications provider has sent notice that the current agreement is being reviewed. Juvenile Hall and the Jail have invited other providers to demonstrate their products. Hopefully, we can find a provider that better serves our needs.

Response (Board of Supervisors): The Board agrees with the response provided by the Chief Probation Officer. Further study is necessary to find other providers to lower the cost.

Response Required

Mendocino County Board of Supervisors (Recommendations A–J)

Mendocino County Office of Education Board of Trustees (Recommendations C, D)

Mendocino County Superintendent of Schools (Recommendations C, D)

Response Requested

Mendocino County Department of Probation (Recommendations A - J)

Mendocino County Department of Mental Health Services (Recommendations C, E)

Mendocino County General Services (Recommendations G, H, I)

