



# San Diego County Probation Department

Post Office Box 23597 • San Diego, California 92193-3597

[www.sandiegocounty.gov/probation](http://www.sandiegocounty.gov/probation)



**Tamika Nelson, Chief Probation Officer**

July 27, 2022

Yvette Klepin  
Juvenile Justice Commission Chair  
2901 Meadow Lark Drive  
San Diego, CA 92123

## **Response to the 2021 Juvenile Justice Commission (JJC) Facility Inspection Report for Kearny Mesa Juvenile Detention Facility (KMJDF)**

Dear Ms. Klepin:

We are in receipt of the JJC 2021 Facility Inspection Report for KMJDF. Below, please find the San Diego County Probation Department responses to the JJC recommendations as it pertains to KMJDF.

### **Recommendation a:**

The Juvenile Justice Commission recommends the Juvenile Court and Community Schools (JCCS):

- i. Increase the number of CTE instructors
- ii. Provide more variety of CTE courses
- iii. Collaborate with Probation to develop afterschool programs for the youth

### **Response a:**

SDCOE and JCCS worked in collaboration with the San Diego County Probation Department, Institutional Services-Urban Camp (UC) to increase the number of CTE instructors from three (3) to seven (7). Included in the seven CTE instructors are two full-time teachers and five part-time teachers. With the addition of CTE instructors, there has been an overall increase in the number of CTE courses from two to four. In the fall of 2022, JCCS will be adding a Horticulture program to the UC commitment program. The afterschool programs are provided through the ASSETs grant which provides youth opportunities to expand their learning academically, socially, artistically, emotionally, and physically through collaboration from probation and school staff. All programs are offered to all students, and are noted below:

David's Harp: Non-profit organization that teaches music production to students including all technology involved in the process. They open their studios to students upon being released to continue their education and offer internship opportunities to students.

Credit Recovery: Ran by a JCCS teacher, offers students high school credit recovery to recoup lost credits. We also partner with The Movement to provide after school tutoring to help students with their work. Students meet with the teacher once or twice a week to go over work and then credits are updated on their transcript as they are earned.

Project AWARE: Nonprofit that uses restorative practices to work with all youth through a credible messenger. They discuss trials and obstacles our youth face as well as how to overcome them.

Yard Games: Each unit has been provided yard games to use with students and partners to build social emotional health in the cottages. These include cornhole, giant Jenga, ping pong, giant connect 4, giant tic-tac-toe and other sports equipment. This equipment can be used during rec, free time, or school when students may need to take a break and engage in something carefree. This has also been a great collaboration between probation and school as both entities use the equipment to build trust and rapport with students and staff.

Garden: The garden was provided by Coastal Roots Farm and in our after-school program, students take care of all garden needs. Both probation and school support supervision and education of the garden to students.

Running Club: Currently unable to safely implement due to COVID restrictions; however, running club prepares students for marathons in our community. Students are provided proper shoes and athletic wear to run great distances. Probation and Education Staff support in the training, coaching, and facilitating of the program.

**Recommendation b:**

The Juvenile Justice Commission recommends Probation:

- i. Continue to monitor OC spray use
- ii. Continue to work towards limited to no use of OC spray
- iii. Continue to train staff in de-escalation strategies
- iv. Implement the Mandt Training
- v. Division Chief of the facility review all OC incident reports and document the review in the report

**Response b:**

The Probation Department is committed to developing and sustaining a positive youth development culture wherein youth on youth violence is lessened, and the use of OC spray is limited or no longer needed for the protection of the youth or where officers do not feel the need to carry OC spray for their own safety. The Probation Department has trained all direct care staff in the areas of Adolescent Brain Development, Trauma-Informed Care, Implicit Bias, and Restorative Practices. It is hopeful this will improve communication and rapport between staff and youth and result in a reduction of serious incidents and the use of force including OC spray.

The Probation Department began rolling out the first phase of the MANDT System to all Institutional management staff and supervisors. In August 2022, front line officers will begin attending the initial modules of Mandt.

Each facility monitors the use of OC within their facility, and its use is always documented in the form of a written incident report. From these reports, we can collect data on the frequency, the amount of OC being used, and which specific officers are using this type of force. This data is regularly reviewed at the Department's Executive level and at the Facility's Management level, as well as through the facility's Incident Review Committee. The purpose of the Incident Review Committee is to render a single finding to determine if the force used was within policy and will provide recommendations for areas of additional training, changes in policy, or if further administrative investigation is needed. The Probation Department has appointed two Division Chiefs to each institutional facility to better manage the workload to allow for proper review of all OC/violent incidents. The Probation Department has partnered with national experts from the Council of Juvenile Justice of Administrators (CJJA) to review and improve our de-escalation and use of force practices to ensure they are within national best practices, along with recommendations relative to national standards. The department is also contracting with

Performance Based Standards (PbS), which is an additional data system which effectively identifies trends within our facilities.

**Recommendation c:**

The Juvenile Justice Commission recommends Probation:

- i. Add clerical and nursing staff positions
- ii. Consult with nurses and the Program Manager of the medical agency to ensure there is proper coverage for the safety of youth as well as for the opportunity for nursing staff to take healthy needed breaks
- iii. Ensure medical staff have the means to transport medical equipment to emergencies (i.e., crash cart)

**Response c:**

Medical Clinic staffing meets the clinical needs of the youth population served within our facility. In consultation with the contracted Health Service Administrator: (i) an Administrative Assistant position has been added to their staff, (ii) the current daily staffing plan at YTC includes two 12 hr. Registered Nurses allowing for nursing coverage to meet the clinical needs of the youth and the opportunity for the nursing staff to take their required breaks and (iii) necessary emergency medical equipment is transported in a wheeled medical bag during a medical emergency.

**Recommendation d:**

The Juvenile Justice Commission recommends Behavioral Health:

- i. Plan and develop a positive/collaborative partnership at all levels

**Response d:**

The Probation Department agrees with the recommendation of the JJC and will be working with Behavioral Health to better our collaborative relationship through partnership events where camaraderie can be established at all levels.

**Recommendation e:**

The Juvenile Justice Commission recommends Probation:

- i. Increase staff morale through more transparency at the higher executive levels
- ii. Include line staff when changes to program, policy and procedures are anticipated
- iii. Continue to update policies and procedures that take into consideration day to day operations as well as administrative needs
- iv. Executive level staff provide on-going updates in regard to program development of SB823 youth
- v. Provide the means for staff to have camaraderie-building opportunities (i.e., BBQs)

**Response e:**

In an effort to increase officer morale through more transparency at the higher levels, the Deputy Chief Probation Officer and the facility Division Chief(s) host quarterly Town Hall meetings wherein updates on policy and procedures are discussed, departmental updates are provided, and officers are encouraged to have a voice in discussions. Officers are included in updates and changes in practice/policy regarding facility matters, procedures and the implementation and role of facility procedures. The voice of the officers is heard during daily facility briefings, participation in the Institutional Solution Committee meetings which encompasses line officers in discussion of facility matters, and through the Division Chief(s) whom have an open-door policy.

The Probation Department takes into consideration day-to-day operations including Title 15 mandates before making any decisions. The Probation Department has assigned a Supervising Probation Officer and a Deputy Probation Officer to the program development of SB823. They work closely with executive level staff and receive on-going updates regarding the development of the program.

Camaraderie building opportunities have been provided through monthly barbecue events, facility potluck opportunities, the addition of a staff break room, an onsite wellness center and the addition of a staff specific counselor designed to enhance staff wellness. The Probation Department has also secured regular meals during work hours for officers on duty in a state-of-the-art staff dining area. The Probation Department has provided Major League Baseball (MLB) tickets as an incentive to officers who consistently go above and beyond their duties. In addition, an Employee of the Month board display has been created wherein we feature all the employees of the month via photography. Furthermore, the employee of the month is designated a parking space. An employee of the year award is provided at the end of the year.

**Recommendation f:**

The Juvenile Justice Commission recommends:

- i. Facility administrator/supervisor walks through the facility more than “as needed.”

**Response f:**

The Probation Department has appointed an additional Division Chief at each facility to better assist with facility management. This has resulted in an increase in operational awareness on the management level as the Division Chief(s) are now able to walk about the facility on a daily basis, checking in with officers, assessing the temperature of the facility and engaging in operational matters such as morning briefings, MDT meetings and cottage meetings.

**Recommendation g:**

The Juvenile Justice Commission recommends the Probation Department:

- i. Set a reasonable due date for policy revision
- ii. Provide a due date to the Juvenile Justice Commission
- iii. Complete the revisions by the due date selected

**Response g:**

The Probation Department agrees with the recommendation of the JJC and as such has assigned personnel to the position of policy revision.

**Recommendation h:**

The Juvenile Justice Commission recommends Probation and Behavioral Health:

- i. Work collaboratively to bring evidenced based programs to the facility that will be delivered by experts in the field.

**Response h:**

The Probation Department agrees with the recommendation of the JJC and as such has worked with BHS who has dedicated a clinician to the female cottage and collaboratively have implemented a variety of evidenced based programming equitable to both the male and female committed population.

**Recommendation i:**

To increase morale and staff participation the Juvenile Justice Commission recommends:

- i. A line staff representative from the facilities attends and participates in meetings such as the Juvenile Justice Task Force and the Juvenile Justice Coordinating Council

**Response i:**

In an effort to increase officer morale and transparency the facility Division Chief(s) host quarterly Town Hall meetings; wherein, updates on policy and procedures are discussed, departmental updates are provided, and officers are encouraged to have a voice in discussions. Officers are included in updates and changes in practice/policy regarding facility matters, procedures and the implementation and role of facility procedures. The voice of the officers is heard during daily facility briefings, participation in the Institutional Solution Committee meetings which encompasses line officers in discussion of facility matters, and through the Division Chief(s) who have an open-door policy. Officers are included on committees around the facility regarding the development, piloting, and implementation of the facility's new Behavior Management System, as well as procedural updates.

Thank you for this opportunity to respond to the Juvenile Justice Commission 2021 Facility Inspection Report for Kearny Mesa Juvenile Detention Facility.

Very respectfully,

TAMIKA NELSON  
CHIEF PROBATION OFFICER  
SAN DIEGO COUNTY PROBATION DEPARTMENT

cc: Denise Huffhines, Assistant Chief Probation Officer  
Jason Druxman, Deputy Chief Probation Officer, Institutional Services  
Cynthia Gamboa, Division Chief, Youth Transition Campus  
Bernita Lacy, Division Chief, Youth Transition Campus