COUNTY OF SOLANO
PROBATION DEPARTMENT

Isabelle Voit
Chief Probation Officer

Bruce Lillis
Chief Deputy Probation Officer

May 4, 2010

Honorable D. Scott Daniels
Presiding Judge of the Superior Court
Solano Superior Court
600 Union Ave.
Fairfield, CA 94533

Dear Judge Daniels:

Enclosed please find the Chief Probation Officer response to the 2009-2010 Grand Jury Report Entitled: Solano County Juvenile Hall, dated March 19, 2010.

Sincerely,

Isabelle J. Voit
Chief Probation Officer
Solano County

cc: Grand Jury
Michael Johnson, County Administrator
George Untal, Senior Management Analyst
Hon. Robert Fracchia, Presiding Juvenile Court Judge

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Juvenile Hall

Issued March 19, 2010

Chief Probation Officer response to the Grand Jury Report:

Finding 1 – There are no courtroom facilities in Juvenile Hall. Juveniles must be transported to the Superior Court for their required court appearances. Providing transportation involves additional expense, safety and security issues to juveniles, counselors, transporting staff and the general public.

Probation's Response to Finding 1– Probation agrees with this finding.

Recommendation 1 – The Grand Jury suggests that the County work with the Superior Court to provide a facility at Juvenile Hall that could be used for juvenile hearings.

Probation's Response to Recommendation 1 – This matter is not under the control of the Probation Department. Discussions between Solano County and the Solano Courts regarding construction of court facilities at the Juvenile Detention facility site have taken place, but securing funding for the project continues to be a major obstacle.

Finding 2 – There is no procedure in place that allows juveniles to take their G.E.D. exam.

Probation's Response to Finding 2 – Probation agrees with this finding.

Recommendation 2 – A procedure should be established with the County Office of Education and the Fairfield/Suisun Unified School District for the G.E.D. test to be administered as needed.

Probation's Response to Recommendation 2 – This recommendation has been implemented. Fairfield-Suisun Unified School District has agreed to provide testing as needed.

Finding 3 – Due to pending budget cuts, Juvenile Hall may lose all mental health staff, leaving no trained mental health specialists to monitor juveniles in crisis.

Probation's Response to Finding 3 – Probation disagrees partially with this finding. Solano County Mental Health (SCMH) has stopped providing services to the Juvenile Detention Facility. Immediately after the withdrawal of SCMH, services were provided by Seneca Center and through Probation paying to maintain the services of a psychiatrist under an existing SCMH contract. Beginning May 10, 2010, mental health services are being provided by California Forensic Medical Group, the existing medical provider for the Juvenile Detention Facility.

Recommendation 3 – It is imperative to ensure that Mental Health program services are provided. A possible solution to this issue would be the combining of Mental Health program of Juvenile Hall with existing County Mental Health programs within the Department of Health and Social Services.

Probation's Response to Recommendation 3 – The recommendation will not be implemented as an appropriate plan for provision of mental health services is in place.

Finding 4 – A large number of juveniles require Special Education. There are only two special education teachers to comply with all Individual Education Plans (IEPs).

Probation's Response to Finding 4 – Probation disagrees partially with this finding. Approximately 25% of the minors in the Juvenile Detention Facility are Special Education students. According to Solano County Office of Education Alternative Education Director Rick Vaccaro, the current level of staffing for this size population is more than what is provided in public schools.

Recommendation 4 – Due to the number of juveniles with Special Education needs, i.e., academic and emotional needs, it would be beneficial to have additional Special Education teachers as many juveniles come into Juvenile Hall with learning disabilities. Additional funding should be provided to acquire additional Special Education teachers.

Probation's Response to Recommendation 4 – This matter is not under the control of the Probation Department; however, the Solano County Office of Education indicates that this recommendation will not be implemented.

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Finding 5 – Currently, the wards have to be removed from the facility for dental care. A local dentist has volunteered to come to the facility and provide the appropriate dental care. Complete dental office/equipment was donated to Juvenile Hall by the Solano County Sheriff's Department. The appropriate space is available and the equipment just needs to be installed.

Probation's Response to Finding 5 – Probation disagrees partially with this finding. Only wards requiring immediate/emergency care are transported outside the facility. The average is about 60 outside dental trips per year. A local dentist has volunteered to come to the facility to provide dental care but would charge for the service. In addition to installation of the equipment, necessary supplies would be required on an ongoing basis to provide dental care in the facility.

Recommendation 5 – The Board of Supervisors should instruct the appropriate county department to install the donated equipment.

Probation's Response to Recommendation 5 – This matter is not under the control of the Probation Department.