



**SOLANO COUNTY GRAND JURY**  
2014 - 2015

**Solano County Juvenile Detention Facility Complex**

# **Solano County Juvenile Detention Facility Complex**

2014-2015 Solano County Grand Jury

## **I. SUMMARY**

The 2014-15 Grand Jury visited the Juvenile Detention Facility Complex on January 8, 2015 with concentration on the following:

- The surveillance system upgrade completion
- The educational opportunities
- The Medical/Mental services provided
- Internal and external programs available

## **II. INTRODUCTION/BACKGROUND**

California Penal Code §919 subdivision (b) provides, *The Grand Jury shall inquire into the condition and management of the public prisons within the county.* Pursuant to the statute, the 2014-15 Grand Jury inspected the Juvenile Detention Facility Complex (JDFC). It is managed and operated by the Solano County Probation Department. The facility is located at 740 Beck Avenue, Fairfield, California with 126 available beds. There are three separate units within JDFC. The units are the Juvenile Detention Facility (JDF), New Foundations (NF) and the Challenge Academy (CA).

The JDF is a locked facility with a total 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. Juveniles may be held until the age of 19. Once a juvenile becomes 19 years of age then he/she is transferred to the County Jail.

The JDFC population at the time of the Grand Jury's visit was 48 in the JDF, 13 in NF and 7 in the CA. The average stay for the juveniles in the JDF is 17 days. The staff of the JDFC consists of 63 allocated Group Counselors operating on rotating shifts, four allocated Senior Group Counselors and four allocated Supervising Group Counselors.

New Foundations is a 30-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 and drug and alcohol abuse intervention.

The Challenge Academy is a 20-bed unit also located within the JDFC. This program provides youth with necessary skills, education and training to assist them in changing their negative thinking and behavior. It prepares the youth for family reunification and re-entry into the community.

Programs in all units consist of general academic education, anger avoidance, self-esteem building, self-discipline and personal accountability.

### **III. METHODOLOGY**

#### **Toured the Juvenile Detention Facility Complex:**

- Juvenile Detention Facility (JDF)
- New Foundations (NF)
- Challenge Academy (CA)
- Intake Center
- Medical Center
- Upgraded Surveillance System Control Room

#### **Interviewed:**

- Probation Department Staff
- Supervisory Counselors
- Unit Counselors
- Educational Management Personnel
- Teachers
- Para-educator Personnel (Certified teacher's helpers)
- Several resident minors
- Medical Staff

#### **Reviewed:**

- Solano County Comprehensive Multiagency Juvenile Justice Action Plan
- Juvenile Justice Coordinating Council Report (JJCC)
- Previous Grand Jury Reports
- Intake Screening Form
- Booking Information Form
- Custody Classification Assessment Form
- Property Record Form
- Minor Orientation Checklist
- Non-Bookable Offenses Reference List
- Visiting Hours and Regulations
- Solano Juvenile Institutions Web Site
- Various pamphlets and handouts provided by the JDFC staff
- Juvenile Detention Facilities Services Chart

#### IV. STATEMENT OF FACTS

Solano County Juvenile Institutions Goal is to provide a short-term residential treatment program that meets the California Code of Regulations, Title 15, *Minimum Standards for Juvenile Facilities*. The staff 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 custody. They care for every minor in a manner that reduces anxiety and maximizes the potential for personal growth, maturity and development.

The Solano County Comprehensive Multiagency Juvenile Justice Action Plan was updated in July 2014. The plan was prepared for the Solano County Juvenile Justice Coordinating Council (JJCC). The plan which included the following was presented to JJCC on October 16, 2014.

The trend lines for both misdemeanor and felony arrests of Solano County youth show year to year declines since 2006. In 2013 Solano County juveniles were arrested for 942 misdemeanor offenses and 452 felony offenses. The most common misdemeanor offenses for which Solano County juveniles were arrested include assault and battery (279), petty theft (159), marijuana (112) and the most frequent felony offenses include burglary (132), assault (69) and robbery (59).

	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013
<b>Total Misdemeanors</b>	3,628	3,488	2,817	2,152	1,979	1,640	1,087	942
<b>Total Felonies</b>	1557	1474	1132	830	793	642	571	452

Juvenile Justice System Diversion and early interventions are important aspects of Solano County's juvenile justice continuum. A large number of youth offenders are diverted from the juvenile justice system at the police level. If a youth fails probation diversion, or has been accused of a serious crime, the case is referred to the District Attorney (DA) for consideration of filing a Juvenile Court petition.

In partnership with the DA's Office, the Probation Department has operated a Felony Diversion Program since 2006. The goal of the program is to provide intensive intervention services early on to minors with felony arrests in an effort to divert them from the juvenile court system and from 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. During FY2013-2014, 71 minors were served in the Felony Diversion Program. The majority of minors in the program were referred for property and drug related offenses. Over 80% of the cases with diversion contracts completed the program successfully.

The Juvenile Institutions Division of the Probation Department is responsible for the operation of the county's Juvenile Detention Facility, Challenge Academy and New Foundations. The New Foundations program has been in operation since 1996 and continues to provide substance abuse treatment services to minors. The population was reduced from 30 to 15 in order to allow for a more focused approach in addressing those who abuse drugs and/or alcohol. In FY2013-2014 the Department contracted with a private company to provide substance abuse and mental health services. The program length is an average of four (4) months, which includes family reunification efforts.

The Challenge Academy Program opened in 2014 and serves as a secure commitment program for minors 15-17 years old. The Challenge Academy can serve up to 20 minors and is nine (9) months in length. While in the program, minors receive mental health counseling and vocational workshops through the Solano County Office of Education and participate in restorative justice efforts. In addition, minors also work with community based organizations and businesses for vocational training and community service opportunities.

When a minor is brought into the facility, the following is completed:

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

Three previous Grand Jury reports identified the lack of an effective electronic surveillance system. While touring the facility it was verified that the **installation of the surveillance system has been completed**. There are 128 cameras. The recordings are digitally kept for one year. The surveillance room is manned 24 hours a day.

The Grand Jury observed educational facilities that are available. State approved Common Core Standards have 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 Educational 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 (IEP). In addition, there is an Accelerated Credit Accumulation program available based upon self-study that allows earned credits to be transferred to traditional high schools.

The Grand Jury observed classes in progress, interviewed students and received feedback about the positive programs available.

The Grand Jury visited the medical facility and was informed that approximately 30% of the juveniles admitted to the facility were on prescribed psychotropic (behavior altering) medication. These medications must be administered in the proper amount and must be monitored continuously by the medical staff.

**The medical staff consists of:**

- Registered Nurses
- Medical Assistants
- Physician in residence twice a week
- Physician's Assistants
- Psychiatrist - Saturday's
- Mental Health Clinician – every day
- Licensed Vocational Nurse
- On-call Physicians

**Prevention**

Several volunteer programs offered by the community have been implemented and are well received by staff and minors. Below are some:

- Alcoholics Anonymous
- Narcotics Anonymous
- Planned Parenthood
- Anger Management
- AIDS Awareness
- Religious services and Bible study
- Youth mentoring
- Solano Community College Interns
- Motivational speakers
- Girl Scouts of America

**Internal Staff programs offered:**

- Thinking for a Change
- Aggression Replacement Therapy
- Family Reconciliation
- Forward Thinking
- Teen Matrix Model
- Cognitive Life Skills, i.e. retraining thought processes

## **V. FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

**Finding 1** - All Grand Jury reports written since 2011 have noted the surveillance system was deficient. The surveillance system has been upgraded and is fully functional.

**Recommendation 1** - Continue to use the current upgraded electronic surveillance system.

**Finding 2** - The Grand Jury determined the staff is operating the Juvenile Detention Facility Complex effectively.

**Recommendation 2** - The Juvenile Detention Facility Complex staff continue their operation and maintenance procedures at the professional level observed during the Grand Jury inspection.

**Finding 3** – Observations of the minors in class as well as educational items in their rooms indicate that they are motivated to improve their education and life skills.

**Recommendation 3** - Continue to offer the prevention, education and life skill programs.

### **COMMENTS**

The 2014-15 Grand Jury was very impressed with the overall cleanliness, educational opportunities and professional attitude of the facility personnel. We commend them for their continued effort in improving services for youth.

### **REQUIRED RESPONSES**

Solano County Probation Department

### **COURTESY COPIES**

Clerk, Solano County Board of Supervisors