

MOTION BY SUPERVISORS HOLLY J. MITCHELL
AND SHEILA KUEHL

July 13, 2021

Preparing For The Closure Of The Division Of Juvenile Justice Plan

On May 14, 2020, Governor Gavin Newsom announced, as part of the revised budget, that the California Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation’s Division of Juvenile Justice (DJJ) would be closing. The decision recognized the longstanding problems associated with the state youth prison system and the need to better support youth’s rehabilitation and redefine public safety through providing age-appropriate treatment and keeping them closer to their communities and families. Under subsequent legislation passed in 2020 and 2021, intake of new youth to DJJ ended July 1, 2021, with certain exceptions, and counties will begin receiving annual funding to meet the needs of the population currently served by DJJ. Youth currently at DJJ may remain there until the facilities close in 2023.

State law set forth a collaborative process to develop plans to meet the needs of youth realigned to county care. All counties must establish a subcommittee of their Juvenile Justice Coordinating Council (JJCC) to develop and submit plans for local alternatives to DJJ to a new state agency, the Office of Youth and Community Restoration, by January 1, 2022.

Ahead of the legislation eventually adopted by the state of California, on May 26, 2020, the Los Angeles County (County) Board of Supervisors (Board) unanimously

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approved a [motion](#) asking the County's Youth Justice Work Group (YJWG) – already convened and comprised of diverse experts – to begin to immediately prepare for the transition of youth who would have been committed to DJJ to instead be in the County's custody and care. The County was uniquely positioned to fold its vision for DJJ alternatives into the YJWG's existing collaborative process to transform the County's youth justice system into a rehabilitative, health-focused and care-first system. The motion thus requested that the YJWG also begin developing local plans for DJJ's closure. In late 2020, the YJWG submitted recommendations to the Board for a comprehensive, phased approach to transforming the County's youth justice system, titled Youth Justice Reimagined, and the YJWG's DJJ Subcommittee submitted specific recommendations for developing and using alternatives to DJJ guided by the vision and principles of Youth Justice Reimagined.

Subsequently, the JJCC Subcommittee was created in January 2021, as required under state legislation, to further develop a plan for the County to assume responsibility for the custody, treatment and supervision of youth who would have otherwise been committed to DJJ. On February 9, 2021, the Board instructed the committee, called the Juvenile Justice Realignment Block Grant (JJRBG) subcommittee, whose membership is established by state legislation, to consult with local justice, health, community, and other relevant stakeholders, to report back in writing in 120 days with: 1) recommendations that consider and incorporate, where appropriate, the YJWG's recommendations, including those from the report entitled, "Youth Justice Reimagined: Recommendations of the Youth Justice Work Group DJJ Transition Team"; and 2) a DJJ plan (Plan) for approval by the Board prior to submitting the Plan to the state and institute a standing report back mechanism to the Board on an annual basis to update the Plan as needed.

After conducting site visits at the County's various secure facilities and considering their current use, capacity and ability to be adapted to safely and effectively serve as a "secure youth treatment facility" (SYTF) that is consistent with the County's commitment to a care-first approach, the JJRBG recommended that, beginning July 1, 2021, Campus Kilpatrick in Malibu temporarily serve as the SYTF dispositional option under new state

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law for male youth who would have otherwise been committed to DJJ, until renovations for a small group model environment have been completed at Campus Scott and Scudder, located in Santa Clarita, to serve as the ongoing SYTF. This recommendation that preserves Campus Kilpatrick as the one location where the LA Model is currently implemented.

The JJRBG Subcommittee also recommended that the Dorothy Kirby Center permanently serve in a limited capacity as a SYTF for girls to preserve the one location that is designated as a mental-health specific level 14 placement. In addition, Campus Gonzales would continue to be reserved for a vocational training program (and a possible step-down facility) as set forth in the [motion](#) adopted by the Board on May 15, 2018. Other facilities, including the juvenile halls, were considered and ruled out as a SYTF for reasons that included being overly institutional and lacking capacity to be used without serious disruption to the youth populations currently housed there. These considerations and recommendations echo and are consistent with those articulated in the W. Haywood Burns Institute's final [report](#) issued in December 2020 based on last year's multi-stakeholder DJJ Transition Team that convened intensely over six months last year. Beyond the designation and physical preparation of facilities, the JJRBG Subcommittee's recommendations and ongoing work focus on the importance of multi-disciplinary decision-making and staffing; a continuum of comprehensive, restorative programs and supports; and less restrictive placement options in the community for youth to step down when they are ready in alignment with best practices around youth development and comprehensive public safety.

The youth who might have otherwise been committed to DJJ are some of the most vulnerable and most in need of an alternative rooted in harm repair and healing. While their offenses and adjudications may stoke the fears of some, they are children who have seen, experienced and endured a great deal. The current systems of incarceration only perpetuate the harms they experienced because they are built out of punishment and isolation. In creating an alternative model that comports with Youth Justice Reimagined, we have the opportunity to work towards ending system-involvement for these youth.

WE THEREFORE MOVE THAT THE BOARD OF SUPERVISORS:

- 1) Adopt the Division of Juvenile Justice (DJJ) Subcommittee recommendations for Campus Kilpatrick to be the temporary secure treatment facility location, with Campus Scott or Scudder and Dorothy Kirby Center being the permanent secure treatment facility locations for boys and girls, respectively.
- 2) Recognize that any and all alternatives to DJJ shall be rooted in the vision of Youth Justice Reimagined (YJR).
- 3) Instruct the Chief Probation Officer in collaboration with the Youth Justice Transition Advisory Group and the Juvenile Justice Realignment Block Grant (JJRBG) subcommittee, to ensure that the appropriate renovations are made at Scott or Scudder within 90 days to be safe and ready for use in accordance with the values of YJR and recommendations of the JJRBG subcommittee, and report back in writing in 45 days with an update on progress, and report back in 90 days with a description of the renovations and their alignment with the values of YJR.
- 4) Instruct the Chief Probation Officer, the Youth Justice Transition Advisory Group, and the JJRBG Subcommittee to work collaboratively on preparations to ensure supportive programming (including, among other needs, community-based programming inside facilities to link youth to re-entry services) and a transformative staffing model (e.g., a co-staffing model, and employing credible messengers outside of the Probation Department) that facilitates a safer, more therapeutic environment at Secure Youth Treatment Facilities, as well as to ensure that a continuum of less restrictive options are available; and report back in writing in 45 days with an update on progress, and report back in writing in 90 days with a description of the preparations and their alignment with the values of YJR.
- 5) Instruct the Chief Probation Officer and County Counsel, in collaboration with the Director of the Internal Services Department and other relevant stakeholders, and in consultation with the JJRBG Subcommittee, to work with the Board of State and Community Corrections to ensure compliance with California Building Standards Code, Title 24 mandates before relocating youth and staff; and report back in

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writing in 45 and 90 days with a progress update. Efforts to comply with Title 24 mandates should be, when possible, aligned with the values of YJR.

- 6) Instruct the JJRBG Subcommittee to develop and submit funding recommendations for the first allocation of JJRBG funds to the Board of Supervisors (Board) in 45 days.
- 7) Instruct the JJRBG Subcommittee to further develop and submit the JJRBG plan to the Board for approval no later than 90 days before sending it to the Office of Youth and Community Restoration.
- 8) Instruct the Chief Probation Officer, in close collaboration with the JJRBG Subcommittee and the Youth Justice Reimagined Advisory Group, to report back in writing every 90 days with an update on the implementation of the JJRBG Subcommittee's DJJ Plan, and include a brief discussion on overall efforts to ensure that implementation is aligned with the values of the YJR.

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