



**STATEMENT OF PROCEEDINGS FOR THE
REGULAR MEETING OF THE PROBATION COMMISSION
LOS ANGELES COUNTY PROBATION TRAINING CENTER**



WebEx On-line Session

Thursday, May 14, 2020

10:00 AM

Present: President Joe Gardner, Commissioner Levine 1st Vice President, Commissioner Swartz 2nd Vice President, Commissioner Meredith, Commissioner Herbon, Commissioner Seaver, Commissioner Shutan, Commissioner Mitchell, Commissioner Martinez-Sonoqui, Commissioner Butler, Commissioner Yamashiro, Thomas Faust, Dalila Alcantara, Mark Garcia, Jennifer Kaufman, Ildefonso Cardenas, Adam Bettino, Alex Nieto, Dr. Jason Hasty, Dr. Velasquez, Lynette Wilson, Anna Garcia and Jessica Ayala

Attachment: [Audio Transcript](#)

I. ADMINISTRATIVE MATTERS

Commission President Joe Gardner welcomed all and called the meeting to order. President Gardner announced that meetings are recorded and asked that everyone identify themselves prior to addressing the Commission.

1. Excused Absences: Commissioner Kaplan
2. Roll Call

II. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

3. The following meeting minutes were approved:

- March 12, 2020

The Probation Commission will receive, exchange, distribute information, conduct discussion and take vote and action relevant to Item 3.

III. PROBATION DEPARTMENT

4. **Response from the Probation Department regarding Commissioner Herbon's inspection of Camp Paige submitted to the Department February 13, 2020.**

Acting Chief Deputy Thomas Faust provided the Commission with the following Juvenile Services updates:

- Chief Deputy Sheila Mitchell still on leave.
- Probation emails daily and weekly COVID-19 updates, are also posted on Probation website.
- There has been an overall reduction in Juvenile population (Camps and Halls) of 35% since mid-March 2020.
- On May 9th, 2020 Camp Scott was temporary closed. The youth (ten females) were transferred to Dorothy Kirby Center along with staff.

The Probation Department (Probation or Department) provided written responses to all concerns but elaborated on the following:

Concern #2 - The staff to minor ratio is impacted by programming that takes all available staff off the line in order to run groups and some groups being cancelled due to staff shortage.

The Commission inquired about the impact the new virtual learning module has on staffing. Dr. Jason Hasting, Executive Director at Los Angeles County Office of Education (LACOE), informed the Commission that due to social distancing protocols and depending on the size of a unit/group, a class might need to be conducted two to three times a day; therefore, requiring more Probation staff.

Dr. Hasting reported the following the virtual learning stats:

- 77 sessions were conducted the first week.
- 140 sessions were conducted the second week
- 200 sessions anticipated to be conducted by the third week.

LACOE also brought back most of their teaching staff to assist and is collaborating with Probation to continue to work together to address any challenges.

Concern #4 - The continuing problem is graffiti, which is indicative of supervision skills and adequate staffing.

Jennifer Kaufman, Residential Treatment Services Bureau Chief, reported that much of the graffiti has been accumulated over years. However, once graffiti is identified, it is then photographed and removed by youth who committed the graffiti, youth is billed if unable to remove the graffiti, and both the court and parent/guardian are notified.

Concern #6 – Due to high amount of contraband and illegal drugs being smuggled into camp, one suggestion is to have the Department conduct a more thorough investigation into the criminal history of the parents and siblings using Law Enforcement data bases.

The Commission inquired if further forensic investigations or analysis are conducted on seized contraband (prior to youth possession) to determine identifications of carriers.

Ms. Kaufman, stated that the Department doesn't possess forensic technology, but collaborates with the Sheriff Department to conduct contraband investigations. The Sheriff Department suggested installing license plate readers/cameras at the gates to help identify the carriers and increased perimeter patrol. Adult Special Enforcement Operation unit may investigate possible contraband correlations between youth and parents in the future. County Counsel has been asked to research the legality of investigating the criminal history of the parents or siblings if they're suspected of providing contraband to the youth while housed in the facilities.

The Commission requested the age and accuracy of the vapor tracers being used on searches. Ildfonso Cardenas, Director of Camp Paige, informed the Commission that although the vapor tracers are used only as an aide to the search; they are not the only method used to search.

The Commission requested that as concerns are being addressed, the speaker on each concern should also provide a post-COVID-19 update on the status of the camp.

The Commission inquired why 100 entry level staff are being hired when there's a reduction in population and a pandemic. Ms. Kaufman informed the Commission that the hiring is to fill backlog of vacant Adult and Field positions, not necessarily new hires.

Concern #7 - Gang activity is constant despite efforts of staff to curtail such activity.

The Commission queried if there are rival gangs within the facility, are they being mixed, and what is the percentage. A daily gang assessment is conducted, Mr. Cardenas reported that 95% belong to gangs and are being mixed to eliminate collaboration within their own gang.

Concern #8 - Minors appear to disregard the directions of staff with impunity. Courts are being made aware of significant write ups, but judicial accountability was reported to be exercised by only a few departments.

The Commission requested clarification regarding a youth being sent to sentencing court if they commit a violation while in custody. Director Cardenas confirmed youth are sent to sentencing court and noted that he has seen an improvement in the youth's behavior and manners.

Commissioner Yamashiro shared that due to COVID-19 the courts are operating with a reduced staff. Judges are reporting on a rotation which might impact response times.

Concern #9 - Young adults and minors are verbally, physically and sexually assaulting staff. Female staff are subjected to behavior that should be considered totally unacceptable.

The Commission requested confirmation that a police report/charges are filed when there's an assault on staff by youth and if there is a chain of command procedure staff

need to adhere to when filing. Director Cardenas confirmed police report are filed and that administration works with the District Attorney, but there is no pre-approval or sign-off required from management in order for the staff to file charges. Mark Garcia, Detention Services (DSB), Bureau Chief also confirmed the same applies for Detention Services Bureau.

The Commission inquired about the Department not reporting/filing minor offenses/charges against the youth so that it does not supersede the youths present offense/charge.

Based on Welfare and Institution code case law someone who is initially convicted on a 707b offense then commits a lesser crime, if filed the lower offense would supersede the more serious offense.

Concern #10 - Kitchen staff fear for their safety and do not have the training that would help them deal with problematic youth. It might be valuable to provide de-escalation training for culinary staff.

The Commission inquired if the training is mandatory and pervasive. Adam Bettino, Professional Accountability, Bureau Chief, informed the Commission training is being calendared for the beginning of next fiscal year.

Concern #11 - Outside vendors including Community Based Organization's (CBO), religious volunteers and contractors are coming into camp with limited knowledge of the complexity and dangerous behaviors of the youth in camp. There should be a mandatory training before they move about unescorted on the grounds.

The Commission suggested the Department develop a log to track training signoffs (both vendors and volunteers) electronically for accountability purposes.

Ms. Kaufman informed the Commission that the Department is working on a curriculum to standardize training and will include signoffs of manuals and requirements. The Commission requested confirmation that all vendors and/or volunteers signed a disclaimer outlining the rules and guidelines in the facility. Ms. Kaufman confirmed all vendors and/or volunteers do sign provisional clearance forms and that are saved on a share drive. The Commission also inquired about an auditing processes of CBOs.

➤ **Motion was introduced and passed to extend meeting to 12:30 p.m.**

Concern #13 - The box holding the cut down tool in the gym has been broken into. The cut down tool has since been located; however, I would question the highly visible labeling of the cut down tool locker in an area frequented by the minors.

The Commission inquired if any acclamation was given to the staff who found the tool. Jennifer Kaufman informed the Commission she sent the staff a letter from the Bureau recognizing their extra efforts and congratulating them on a job well done.

Concern #14 - There was an outside contractor completing back flow replacement on the field. Their trucks were unlocked, including tool lockers. The trucks were parked between the gym and the kitchen with no supervision. At the very least, all tools (including glue that was unattended) should be locked up. I also believe any outside contractors should receive a security briefing before they are allowed to begin work in any institution.

The Commission queried if there's an audit detailing documents contractors signed/acknowledged of potential hazards. See action items below.

Concern #17 - There should be a weekly meeting that includes LACOE, the Camp Service Manager, Kitchen staff and a Probation staff to discuss hiring of Kitchen Patrols (KP), orderlies, and other trusted positions. This would also be a sounding board for issues such as those being experienced with the clothing and laundry. Laundry issues include larger minors with clothes that did not fit properly when additional sizes have been requested.

The Commission inquired if the weekly meetings (outlined in the Departments response) are still taking place and who attends. Mr. Cardenas listed attendees as Directors, Assisting Directors, MSB, LACOE, DMH, Probation staff, and pertinent guest on a specific topic. The Commission brought a concern regarding not having the accurate representation regarding KPs selection. Mr. Cardenas reported there has been no issues regarding the selection of KPs; however, there is an application process.

Concern #18 - Despite assurances in the past, there are still no earpieces or microphones on the radios. The number of radios seem insufficient.

Ms. Kaufman informed the Commission that updated radios with earpieces are scheduled to be distribute throughout the facilities. Mr. Garcia indicated that satellite phones were received by Halls and Camps.

The Commission inquired if each Camp had their own channel with mutual aid channel. Mr. Cardenas stated they are on the same frequency; however, each facility has CWIRS radios allowing them to communicate with all emergency departments independently

Speaker(s): Jennifer Kaufman, RTSB Bureau Chief
Ildefonso Cardenas, Probation Director
Mark Garcia, DSB Bureau Chief
Dr. Jason Hasty, LACOE Executive Director

Action Item(s):

- The Commission requested a follow up report detailing the number of youths held accountable and reported to the courts. Also, the report should provide what measures are taken to prevent graffiti.
- The Commission requested the age and accuracy of the vapor tracers being used on searches.
- Ms. Kaufman to provide Commission with WIC case law regarding minor crimes committed while in custody.

- 60 day report back regarding Department wide training for cooks.
- 60 day report back regarding auditing processes detailing CBO procedures.
- Probation to provide Commission with copy of CBO provisional clearance form.
- Ms. Kaufman will confirm with MSB regarding what documents a contractor signs and provide an update.
- The Commission requested an update on Emergency Operations from Deputy Director Howard Wong.

5. Response from the Probation Department and Los Angeles County Office of Education regarding Commissioner Butler’s inspection of Central Juvenile Hall submitted to the Department February 25, 2020.

Tabled to May 28th, 2020 meeting

The Probation Commission will receive, exchange, distribute information, conduct discussion and take vote and action relevant to Items 4 and 5.

IV. GENERAL PUBLIC COMMENT

6. Opportunity for members of the public to address the Commission on items of interest within the subject matter of the Commission. Three (3) minutes are allowed, per person, on each agenda and non-agenda item with a total of 15 minutes for public comments unless the Commission sets alternative limits or other allocation of time.

None provided.

The Probation Commission will receive, exchange, distribute information, conduct discussion and take possible action relevant to Item 6.

V. BUSINESS CONTINUED FROM PREVIOUS MEETING

7. Continued discussion of recommendations for dedicated mental health center(s)

Tabled to May 28th, 2020 meeting

The Probation Commission will receive, exchange, distribute information, conduct discussion and take possible action relevant to COMMISSIONER REPORTS AND UPDATES.

Discussion regarding proposed topics for next meeting, scheduled for May 28, 2020.

8. Response from the Probation Department and Los Angeles County Office of Education regarding Commissioner Butler’s inspection of Central Juvenile Hall submitted February 25, 2020.

VI. ANNOUNCEMENTS

None provided.

VII. ADJOURNMENT

The meeting was adjourned at 12:31 P.M.