

JJCC-CAC Meeting (November 16, 2021) Written Public Comments (Agenda Item IV. a. iii.)

1. Edith Macias

YJR envisions a world where youth can attend schools without having police present. This is an urgent matter that the JJCC needs to address today because the more time goes by, the more youth are being funneled into the prison system. Keeping police in schools is predatory and violent and it is not enough to "train" on sight police or reform, they need to get out of schools! Youth need guidance and support not power hungry cops on sight. Kids need to feel free to develop and learn with a group of people who care about them.

2. Evie Sun

My name is Evie Sun and I am a Los Angeles County resident and an intern at Loyola Law School's Youth Justice Education Clinic, which represents system-involved young people with disabilities, some of whom are detained and some of whom are out in the community on probation.

I am speaking on item 4a(3) on today's agenda. I am aware that the Juvenile Justice Coordinating Council Community Advisory Committee (JJCC CAC) will be weighing in on how to spend \$40 to \$60 million to help prevent youth contact with the justice system, and/or to support youth who are system-involved. School-Based Probation has traditionally gotten the lion's share of the funds, and Probation continues to fight to keep \$4.4 million for a program that should be ended.

First and foremost, we need to stop funding school-based probation. Schools should be a place of learning, not criminalization. Having probation officers on campus makes youth feel like criminals in schools, marginalizes and labels youth in school as "bad kids" and lets school administrators continue to rely on law enforcement as a response to behavioral issues. Every dollar spent on costs related to school police is an education dollar diverted from students' education, therefore every effort should be made to prioritize education over-policing. This funding should be re-invested in student safety initiatives that are focused on supporting, not criminalizing, students.

JJCC should not fund school-based probation any longer. Juvenile probation has a \$570 million budget. We certainly should not be using \$4.4 million in JJCPA funding for school-based probation. Furthermore, PRA requests have been sent to Probation to better understand this program. They have never been answered, and probation stated there is no specialized training for this program. Last year's CMJJP showed that the number of youth on probation supervision has decreased by 30% over 3 years. It has decreased even more over the last decade.

Why then do we still need to use JJCPA funding for this program? Which schools have school-based probation officers? What are their caseloads? How many youths are arrested in these schools each year? What is the program's total budget? The JJCC should provide to the public all of these answers and more before considering providing this program with any more funding.

I urge JJCC to improve this process and remain firm in its commitment to student safety and supporting youth who are system-involved. The Board of Supervisors has endorsed Youth Justice Reimagined (YJR) through multiple unanimous votes, and YJR recommends phasing out school-based supervision in the first 18 months. A year has already passed, so it is the responsibility of the JJCC to stop funding this program.

Sincerely,
Evie Sun

3. Keisha Irving

DPO II Hawkins-Woods has been assigned to the campus of Long Beach Jordan High School since the beginning of the current school year and is already an integral part of the staff and success of the school. On any given day you will find her doing the following:

- 1) Greeting students as they arrive to campus
- 2) Walking the campus during nutrition and lunch, talking to students and building positive relationships.
- 3) Saying goodbye to students and reminding them to stay safe after school

DPO II Hawkins Woods has established herself as one of the most sought-after and trusted adults on the campus. When students need advice or want to speak to an adult that is supportive and they can trust, they often go to her. She also takes time out of her daily schedule to go and sit and talk with our special needs students and they love it; they look forward to it. Anytime she has a meeting and is not on campus, they ask about her.

DPO II Hawkins-Woods also personifies school spirit. She goes to our rallies, athletic events and is one of the biggest cheerleaders for our students. The positive relationships that she establishes with our students makes it much easier when she has to address any type of inappropriate behavior that students exhibit from time to time. They are more receptive because they know that she cares.

DPO II Hawkins-Woods is an essential part of the Jordan High School faculty and we feel very fortunate to have her and hope to have her on our campus for years to come.

Please feel free to call me at (562) 423-1471 or email at Kirving@lbschools.net, if you have any questions or would like to speak further about the benefits of DPO II to the campus of Jordan High School. Thank you for your time.

Best,

Keisha Irving

4. George Rio

Why are all these advocates saying they are interested in helping youth and families, but do not want to fund school-based probation programs?

What about the kids that need help? Do they think by not funding school-based programs they get to fund something else?

School principals and school counselors have spoken of the amazing work probation officers have done to help youth.

And yet advocates that claim they want to help youth, do not want to fund school-based probation programs.

The only talk about the money, they should talk about funding services needed by at-risk youths, youth who have suffered trauma, and youth that need assistance?

I keep hearing how they want to talk about budgets.

Spreadsheets are presented showing programs asking for a lot of money, and no one is talking about de-funding those programs.

Why are the school-based programs being singled out and targeted?

Is it because they work?

Maybe it is because they are so focused on doing anything against probation and law enforcement, that helping youth is no longer their prime concern.

How about we refocus on the most important thing? These committees exist to fund programs that help youth and their families.

Let us help youth and families.

Fund school-based probation programs.

If they can say De-fund, I say fund them.

Helping our youth and families is more important than political agendas aimed at law enforcement.

It's time to look at how law enforcement helps, and give them the opportunities to be the role models they have been for decades.

5. Joseph Williams

To whom it may concern,

My name is Joseph Williams and I am with Students Deserve, a youth-led, inter-generational grassroots coalition of students, parents and educators working against race and class inequities in LA's schools. I am offering this email as public comment for agenda item 4a(3).

We in Students Deserve - along with our allies in the LAYUP Coalition and countless other youth organizations in LA - have long witnessed the over-policing and under-resourcing of LA's youth in school systems throughout the County. We know that Black youth in particular and youth of color at large are disproportionately targeted and criminalized by school-based law enforcement and punitive zero-tolerance policies. Research also shows that school police do not keep schools safer, but do lead to negative academic outcomes for Black students and other youth of color. For decades, students, families and communities have fought against polices that criminalize and abuse youth in LA County's schools like daily random searches, pepper spraying students, willful defiance suspensions, and more. Finally, LA County leaders have started to heed their call.

The Board of Supervisors has endorsed Youth Justice Reimagined (YJR) with multiple unanimous votes. YJR, which was passed a year ago, recommends phasing out school based supervision in the first 18 months. It is time for JJCC to STOP funding school based probation.

We demand an immediate end to the funding of all forms of school based law enforcement, including school police, SROs, safety officers, school based probation officers and more - and the reinvestment of those funds into the trauma-informed, preventative measures that students, families and school communities deserve.

Thank you,

Joseph

6. Kate Teague

To the JJCC -

My name is Kate Teague, I'm with California Youth Connection and writing to oppose continued funding going to school based probation.

California Youth Connection is a youth led organization of current and former foster youth who advocate to transform the foster care system. The movement of youth from the foster care system into the juvenile justice system is extremely problematic and school is frequently a place where foster youth encounter law enforcement leading to contact with the juvenile justice system. Having probation officers on campus makes youth feel like criminals in schools, marginalizes and labels youth in school as "bad kids" and lets school administrators continue to rely on law enforcement as a response to behavioral issues instead of investing in relationships with students.

The Board of Supervisors has endorsed Youth Justice Reimagined (YJR) through multiple unanimous votes, and YJR recommends phasing out school based supervision in the first 18 months. A year has already passed, so it is the responsibility of the JJCC to stop funding this program. Supporting and resourcing a Youth Development Department and public/private partnership grant making provides the tools to schools to support students without criminalizing them.

Stop funding school based probation. Thank you for your time

7. Damon Ayala

Hello, My name is Damon Ayala, USC Social Work Intern with Dignity and Power Now.

I ask that you maintain school campuses as a place of nurturing and learning by eliminating probation officers from campus. Please make better use of the 4.4M in funds by diverting them towards behavioral counselling services, community organizations that can intervene with appropriate services, and replace PO's with credible messengers.

As a youth in school settings, contact with law enforcement and PO's never resulted in a positive impact on my life. To the contrary, it led to being labeled in school and ultimately system impacted. Had the proposed measures I suggested herein been in place then, I may not have experienced the trauma of the juvenile hall and probation camp system, which did nothing but warehouse me and nothing that was healing or restorative in nature.

It's time to try something new: Providing a restorative, care first approach deserves a chance and the County Board of Supervisors agrees with their backing of Youth Justice Reimagined!

Finally, as the number of incarcerated youth decreases, how can this body justify maintaining or increasing funds to Probation based programs?

Respectfully,

Damon Ayala

8. Vivian Wong

As an education attorney for systems-involved students with disabilities, I see firsthand the harm young people experience as a result of their interactions with school-based probation. Stationing probation officers at schools results in over-surveillance of young people of color and with disabilities, which often leads them to be punished and detained for normal adolescent and/or disability-related behavior. Not only do probation officers on school campuses result in new school-based arrests, but it also contributes to an increase in school-based probation violations. I wish I could tell you what percentage of probation violations are school-related, or how many school-based arrests are facilitated by school-based probation officers, but Probation continues to deny us transparency and repeatedly fails to release any metrics that might be helpful in understanding any decision to continue funding the program.

9. Samantha Catherine Camacho

Hello,

My name is Samantha Camacho, and I am an Intern at the Youth Justice Education Clinic (YJEC). YJEC provides education legal services to students in the juvenile injustice and foster care systems. I will be addressing agenda item 4a(3).

We need to halt the funding of School Based Probation. Many of our clients have dealt with the negative effects of the presence of probation officers on campus. It makes kids feel like criminals in schools, which should be safe spaces for them. Instead of a place to focus on learning, students are highly aware of being surveilled. Administration should not continue to rely on law enforcement in issues of behavior, when there are various more productive solutions such as investing in school counselors, certified behaviorists, and community-based service providers.

The JJCC should no longer be funding School Based Probation. The \$4.4 million dollars in JJCPA funding should not be used towards this. The Board of Supervisors endorsed Youth Justice Reimagined (YJR). Part of this new model for juvenile justice advocates for the phasing out of School Based Probation within 18 months. It has already been a year; the JJCC is responsible for stopping the funds going towards this program.

PRA requests have been sent to Probation to better understand School Based Probation, however, they have not answered. We still have many questions regarding this program: Which schools have school based probation officers? What are their caseloads? How many youth are arrested in these schools each year? What is the program's total budget? There needs to be greater transparency.

I urge you to stop funding School Based Probation.

Sincerely,

Samantha Camacho, Intern at Youth Justice Education Clinic, Loyola Law School

10. Ruth Tyson

I am not sure why anyone would throw out getting rid of the school base units that help out young people through the schools district. These "advocates" already dismantled the 236 program within the communities and did absolutely nothing to replace that program. It's looking like a money grab and no real sincerity when it comes to our young people. To say defund school base shows you have no clue what school base does and/or you truly don't care about the young people you

are after the money. School base deputies bring both a understanding of the community because they live in the community they work in and they understand the importance of having providing efficient resources to our youth while maintaining A healthy campus. Our deputies are apart of the school administrators, counselors, teachers, parents and coaches within the school. They are apart of a team. We are not police, we are apart of the community.

Have you spoke to the families, the young people and/or the administrators and students about that have benefitted from the school base units? I don't think so. Many of the callers are working very hard to dismantle a system that actually works. It's disheartening to hear money is more important then seeing what is working and increasing this aspect of probation.