

1979-80 Grand Jury

EDUCATION COMMITTEE

In an era of financial restraint and pressing needs within our County, the Education Committee wishes to discourage the Board of Supervisors from choosing the cost-control method which dictates across-the-board cuts in every department of county government. This miniaturization of departments appears to us to be an unwise method of controlling expenditures. We would prefer that the Board of Supervisors establish priorities for Alameda County which will help to determine which programs should survive and to what extent in the coming years.

Throughout our report we will emphasize the cooperation of various agencies. We applaud the commitments made to date to work together to solve shared problems. The committee urges an even greater reliance on the team approach and hopes the Board of Supervisors will accept this suggestion and make it a priority item in its future evaluation of county programs. Below are programs which the Grand Jury wishes to point out as being worthy of commendation.

COMMENDATION 2 : The Grand Jury commends the efforts of the Perinatal School Health Project undertaken by the Oakland Unified School District and the San Lorenzo Unified School District in cooperation with the State Health Department to combat high infant mortality in Oakland and the Ashland area of San Leandro.

The department and the community have given high priority to health and sex education as a major part of prevention.

In order to insure that health information, education and access to community resources are available to young people in Oakland and the Ashland area of San Leandro the project trains selected nurses, counselors and teachers in grades five, seven and ten. It reviews, evaluates and selects resource materials and develops instructional strategies. It involves community/parents in all phases of the project through an on-going advisory group.

We single out this project for commendation to reinforce the philosophy of teamwork between family, schools and health care agencies. (Appendix A) In order to support the efforts of our schools we recommend the following:

RECOMMENDATION 21 : The Grand Jury recommends that the Board of Supervisors give high priority to the retention of those projects which directly act to strengthen the family unit and provide education in the areas of personal and family health. (Appendix A.2)

COMMENDATION 3 : The Grand Jury commends the Juvenile Court Schools of Alameda County for their outstanding efforts with young offenders.

The county school system provides for the education of young people while in juvenile detention through the County Department of Special Education often referred to as "Court Schools." Although the per capita cost of this short term highly personalized schooling is greater than for public schools, the results are extremely successful. Not only do the young people increase their learning skills at a remarkably high rate but perhaps of equal importance, they gain a degree of self respect, possibly for the first time.

COMMENDATION 4 : The Grand Jury commends the Director and her staff for establishing the Assessment Center which evaluates the educational levels, vocational skill areas and visual and auditory abilities of the juveniles.

The Assessment Center has aided the court school teaching staff in setting up individualized programs for students in juvenile detention. Records at the Juvenile Court Schools show astounding improvement in basic skills for the young people during their time at the facility.

Unfortunately, the progress made during Court School is usually lost soon after the person's release when he or she is required to re-enter the public school system. As a consequence, their inability to adjust while the term is in progress more often leads to failure, truancy drop-outs and quite likely, crime.

Experts agree that youngsters leaving the Court School urgently need a "halfway school" or community school program of transitional education so that they might have a chance to successfully re-enter the public school system. To solve this problem the Alameda County Juvenile Court Schools has proposed a new Day Center School. This pilot school is planned to open in the fall of 1980. It will provide the Juvenile Court and the Probation Department with a resource which has not been previously available. The resources of the Alameda County Office of Education will provide curriculum and special education services. (Appendix B)

In Alameda County there are an estimated 1,500 minors who meet the definition of students who may be served in a Day Center school. This proposal concerns a school for only a portion of these students. In its first year the Day Center School plans to enroll approximately 60 students, provide a full-time staff of four instructors, one deputy probation officer, be open for 240 days per year, and be located in the East Oakland area. The intent of the Day Center School is to provide quality education in the priority areas of proficiency skill building and work experience. The program is to be augmented by related services from probation and public health agencies so as to provide the full range of necessary support services to fully meet the needs of this population.

We feel the County should not only look upon this proposal as an academic advancement, but also as one which could result in considerable future crime control savings. We urge the County to insist on continued close cooperation between the judicial and law-enforcement branches of county government so that conditions of probation will include mandatory participation in the new Day Center School. (Appendix B.2)

RECOMMENDATION 22 : The Grand Jury recommends that the Board of Supervisors continue to direct its legislative representatives to actively support the passage of legislation which provides the funding from the State School Fund to implement this kind of schooling.

COMMENDATION 5 : The Grand Jury commends the City of Berkeley for its outstanding youth employment program, the Berkeley Youth Entitlement Program.

Because it believes in a structured approach to the problems facing our young people, this program not only provides jobs for needy youth within the City of Berkeley but also close teamwork between project leaders and worksite supervisors. This approach does much to instill and reinforce work habits and attitudes which lead to continued employment and career advancement. This program is funded

PROPOSAL FOR A JUVENILE COURT DAY-CENTER SCHOOLOVERVIEW

California Education Code, Chapter 4, Article 2.5 Juvenile Court Schools, authorizes the operation of schools in day-centers to provide Juvenile Court School pupils with quality education and training. Indications from the Probation Department and school district staff are that a substantial number of minors are not attending a regular school program, are in need of an education, and would profit from an alternative school program. In response to this need and the authorization provided by statute, the Alameda County Office of Education is working cooperatively with the Probation Department and other agencies to develop a model program for such a school. Given that there is a need for such day-center schools, a system for referring minors who are eligible for this service must be established with the County Probation Department and the Juvenile Court.

The Alameda County Office of Education is committed to assuring the availability of sound educational programs to all minors entitled to and in need of such programs. The County Office of Education has a long and successful history of maintaining a quality educational program for the juvenile correctional system. This opportunity to provide an extension of the Juvenile Court School program through a day-center is appropriate to the needs of Juvenile Court School students. It will provide the Juvenile Court and the Probation Department with a resource which has not previously been available. Minors who cannot return to their regular school campus because of failure, behavior problems or other reasons could attend the Juvenile Court Day-Center School and receive their education in a community setting.

The resources of the Alameda County Office of Education will provide curriculum support and special education services.

POPULATION TO BE SERVED

In Alameda County there are an estimated 1,500 minors who meet the definition of students who may be served in a day-center school. Legislation states that students who have been expelled from school, who have been referred to a school attendance review board, who are in emergency foster home placement, or who are wards of the court out of school are eligible to be enrolled.

This proposal concerns a school for only one of these groups: 602 court wards who are unsuccessful in making a satisfactory return to school after release from camp-school programs. Both boys and girls could be enrolled. At some later date, planning may be initiated to consider the unique educational needs of the other students in need of similar special schools and a separate planning procedure would be undertaken.

Statistics from other counties substantiate the numbers of unserved youth. Contra Costa County estimated that approximately 1,000 minors were on the streets daily instead of in school before they initiated day-center school programs in November, 1979. Santa Clara and Los Angeles Counties have had such programs for several years.

EDUCATIONAL NEEDS

Recommendations from the Juvenile Court School's ongoing need assessment to plan and provide appropriate programs for incarcerated youth, from the County Office of Education (co-sponsors of a community-based symposium to study Youth in Trouble), and most recently, from the Carnegie Council's Study of Higher Education, all identify students' needs to be:

- counseling and guidance;
- basic academics;
- vocational skill acquisition.

Verification of the accuracy of these needs is available through proficiency tests and recidivism rates for probationary youth, and through self-reports from the youth themselves.

PROGRAM DEVELOPMENT

(A) Planning Data:

- Day-Center to enroll approximately sixty (60) students;
- Full-time staff: four (4) instructors, one (1) deputy probation officer; one (1) secretary;
- Day-Center to operate 240 days per year;
- Location to be the East Oakland area, preferably on a main bus route.

(B) School Program Elements:

The intent of the Day-Center School is to provide quality education in the priority areas of proficiency skill building and work experience. Program will be augmented by related services from probation and public health agencies to provide the full range of necessary support services to fully meet the needs of this population. The program will enable students to complete their diploma requirements and/or enter the labor market. Some students will transfer to other educational programs, i. e. district schools, city colleges, etc. A screening committee with school and probation officials will recommend students for enrollment.

Juvenile Court Day-Center School Course of Study will include these elements:

- test and teach specific proficiency skills;
- issue diplomas;
- give special education assistance;
- provide community-based instruction (outside of the school building);
- bring in vocational and college resource people;
- bring in community resource people (details in later section);

- use activity-based instructional styles, i. e. not just paper/pencil tasks;
- build career awareness;
- assist students in job search activities;
- coordinate professional staff support from related services, i. e. Probation Department, Public Health agencies, Social Services Department;
- offer independent study programs, including GED preparation;
- provide job and personal counseling;
- train for and issue vocational certificates;
- seek work experience assignments in trainee and apprenticeship programs;
- involve parents, area residents and other community representatives in planning, evaluation, support and orientation responsibilities;
- provide breakfast and lunch for all enrolled students.

The academic subjects necessary to acquire a diploma based upon demonstrated proficiency are: reading, writing, computation. The Juvenile Court Day-Center School will offer individual courses in each of the above and also in Life Skills, which includes survival techniques such as placing emergency calls, practicing basic health principles, and communicating verbally. This latter course is not statemandated but was identified as very important for this population by the Juvenile Court School staff. Classwork will comprise half of the daily activities.

Community resource people will be scheduled into the instructional program. Their presentations will enrich the curriculum and motivate students through first-hand experience with representatives from mental health, medical fields, legal services and probation, social services, public utilities, municipal services (fire, police, library), commercial and industrial business, armed services and volunteer agencies.

Vocational training and on-site experience will be the second half of the school's daily program. Groups of students will work with and learn from instructors who will be responsible for teaching job-related skills and attitudes. This program will involve job placement as well as preparation. Four (4) different "crew" programs could be offered simultaneously; the areas of emphasis will include combinations of these occupational families:

- retailing, sales, stock control, purchasing, banking, warehousing;
- food services (provide meals for students); nutrition; child care; health care;
- custodial maintenance and home repairs;
- groundskeeping, gardening, horticulture;
- graphic arts;
- office practices, medical records, typing, keypunch;
- mechanical services, repairs, appliance servicing;
- electrical/electronic applications, wiring, transistor assembly.

(C) Probation Support:

One Deputy Probation Officer with a case load of all of the students in the school (Maximum: 60 co-ed students) will maintain an office in the school. The full range of Deputy Probation Officer duties and responsibilities will be performed (court reports, training and other meetings, home calls, court appearances, etc.). The Deputy Probation Officer will not be available as a disciplinarian to receive youths ejected from class, but will of course work cooperatively with the school staff in resolving problems and in preparing necessary reports and petitions for the return of wards to court.

Additional support by the Deputy Probation Officer might be in the area of daily investigation and appropriate action on matters of truancy. The Deputy Probation Officer would also be available to serve as a resource person in classes having topics concerned with juvenile and criminal justice, juvenile court law, etc. Further, involvement in group and/or family as well as individual counseling would be a regular part of the Deputy Probation Officer's involvement.

FURTHER CONSIDERATIONS

- (A) Develop support services from Social Services Agency and health-related organiza
- (B) Complete budget and finance plan;
- (C) Plan for administrative and emergency counseling services;
- (D) Set a time-line for implementation and assign developmental responsibilities.

** A December, 1979, survey by Probation Department of students eligible for day-center enrollment reported 154 boys and 12 girls as possible enrollees.

PRS:mr
1-4-80

GRAND JURY
COUNTY OF ALAMEDA

COURT HOUSE, OAKLAND, CALIFORNIA 94612

December 28, 1979

Board of Supervisors
Administration Building
1221 Oak Street
Oakland, Ca 94612

Dear Board Members:

Our school system provides for the education of young people while in juvenile detention through the County Department of Special Education often referred to as Court Schools. Although the per capita cost of this short term highly personalized schooling is greater than for public schools, the results are extremely successful. Not only do the young people increase their learning skills at a remarkably high rate but perhaps of equal importance, they gain a degree of self respect, possibly for the first time.

Unfortunately, the progress made during Court School is usually lost soon after the person's release when he or she is required to re-enter the public school system (usually mid-term). As a consequence, their inability to adjust while the term is in progress more often leads to truancy, drop-outs and quite likely--crime.

Experts agree that youngsters leaving the Court School urgently need a "half way house" or community school program of transitional education so that they might have a chance to successfully re-enter the public school system.

Current law provides for the establishment of county community schools but does not provide the additional funds needed. Senate Bill No. 897 (Watson), introduced in March 1979, would amend Section 1981 of the State Education Code so that apportionments from the State School Fund would be available for this specialized transitional education. Therefore, this is not a cost item to the County.

This Bill is not moving and unless action is taken by early January it will be in jeopardy. We urgently request that the Board of Supervisors exert political influence and direct its lobbyists in Sacramento to support this Bill, or at least keep it alive.

We feel that the County should not only look upon this measure as an academic advancement, but also as one which could result in considerable future crime

control savings. We join with many County and State organizations, including Alameda County Juvenile Justice Commission, in backing this Bill and again we urge your support.

Very Truly yours,

Halleck W. Bauer

HALLECK W. BAUER
Foreman
Alameda County Grand Jury

HWB:sl (25-6)