

SAN FRANCISCO PUBLIC DEFENDER

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August 25, 2011

Honorable Judge Katherine Feinstein
Presiding Judge of the Superior Court
Department 206
400 McAllister Street
San Francisco, CA 94102

Re: San Francisco Office of the Public Defender response to 2010-2011 Civil Grand Jury Report on Log Cabin Ranch School (LCRS), "Moving Towards Positive Horizons"

Dear Judge Feinstein,

Pursuant to Penal Code Section 933.05, the Public Defender submits a response to Findings 1-10 of the LCRS Grand Jury Report.

1. Finding 1: The current educational program does not take advantage of the beautiful natural environment of the site, which offers multiple hands-on teaching opportunities.

Agree: For almost all of the youth, the Ranch setting is the first time our urban youth have been exposed to the fresh air, mountains, native fauna and flora, and wildlife. The educational curriculum should integrate lessons on the environment to expand the youth's knowledge of, and to fully engage them to learn and appreciate the pristine and natural surroundings of the Ranch. This could provide the youth with a beginning foundation in green technology which is a growing field for employment opportunities such as solar energy, composting, and conservation of natural resources.

2. Finding 2: Thorough meaningful program evaluation based upon solid data about Log Cabin Residents following graduation is needed. The Grand Jury acknowledges that the improved Log Cabin Ranch program does not currently provide sufficient data about its graduates. However, program assessment is sorely needed.

Agree: Youth should be tracked for at least 2 years to determine success of program. Adult criminal data should also be tracked such as number of arrests, offense categories, and sentencing outcomes. Educational achievement or employment data should also be captured in the evaluation process.

3. Finding 3: LCRS needs an effective "Enterprise Program" to generate operational and programmatic revenue.

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Agree: An effective program to generate funding for the Ranch would build a program of sustainability and independence. A very successful model such as Delancey Street should be explored.

4. Finding 4: Despite well intentioned efforts “turf battles” still exists among stakeholders.

Disagree: This finding is unclear as to who the stakeholders are. Does it include community based organizations, the school district, and any other agency that provides services to the Ranch? It is also unclear as to whether the turf battles are occurring in policy meetings or contested hearings for the youth in their court proceedings.

I do however agree that given the very successful collaborative efforts in programs such as the Juvenile Collaborative Reentry Team Court and the Principal Center Collaborative (PCC), stakeholder meetings should be convened on a regular quarterly basis.

5. Finding 5: Structural improvements are greatly needed to the Ranch.

Agree: While exploring capital funding for the Ranch, efforts should also be directed at renovating and improving Hidden Valley Ranch.

6. Finding 6: LCRS is under-utilized and the recent programmatic changes warrant expansion to maximum capacity.

Disagree: Unless and until there are improvements in consistent and meaningful programming such as evidence based substance abuse programs and violence prevention, strengthened reentry planning such as JCRT, and independent evaluation and assessment to measure success and strength of the program, expansion to maximum capacity should proceed only until there are verified and measured improvements in educational and programming curriculum as indicated in the findings and recommendations of the Grand Jury Report.

7. Finding 7: Current vocational programs set up the residents for disappointment because permanent jobs are not available in those areas of training. Training is not adequate for entry level positions.

Agree: Given the restrictions of our dire economic climate, it is important to provide practical and meaningful employment training and opportunities to the youth. There are still jobs available for coffee baristas, or in the culinary, or green energy fields. Other successful models such as Delancey Street or The Old Skool Café should be explored for LCRS vocational opportunities.

8. Finding 8: Not all members of the Ranch staff have fully embraced the tenants of the Missouri Model.

Agree: Training and continuing evaluation and education of the Missouri model for all staff is encouraged. Written quarterly reports on the progress and implementation of the Missouri Model should be reported and discussed at a quarterly stakeholders meeting.

9. Basic high school program in its current form offers a limited education curriculum.

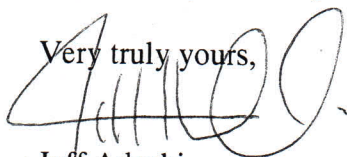
Agree: Youth who transition from the education offered at JJC detention center often report that their adjustment to the Ranch school program is difficult. Team meetings with school staff at JJC and Ranch should occur prior to the youth's move to the Ranch to ensure a smooth transition. Integrating the incentive based curriculum of the Big Picture School as now implemented at the Principal Collaborative Center would be highly recommended. Some of our PCC clients have secured internships, paid employment, and have volunteered to remain at PCC even after termination from probation.

10. Juvenile Collaborative Reentry Team Court should be made available to LCRS graduates.

Agree: As a partner in JCRT, we have seen the many successes of our JCRT clients. They are engaged in school, some entering college, graduating from probation, stabilizing in their homes and communities, and the recidivism rate for JCRT clients has greatly improved. Notification should be made to the defense attorney of Case Review Meetings to develop reentry case planning with the youth and families. This should occur at least 6 months prior to the youth's proposed graduation from LCRS. This model of collaborative reentry team planning has proven highly successful in the JCRT model. Our office will make every effort to actively participate in the reentry case planning on behalf of our clients and their families.

I appreciate the work and effort of the Civil Grand Jury in its preparation of this report. If there are any further questions, please feel free to contact me.

Very truly yours,



Jeff Adachi
Public Defender

cc: San Francisco County Civil Grand Jury