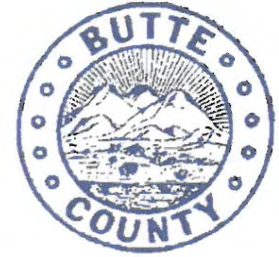




BUTTE COUNTY PROBATION DEPARTMENT



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August 11, 2008

Findings

F1. The Grand Jury found the method used to convey rules and policy information to wards inadequate. This info is critical to a successful detention experience in Juvenile Hall. A properly prepared rights and policies manual for individual distribution should be considered. This manual would pertain only to the wards and could be written at a grade level more comprehensible to them. The Grievance Procedure should be included in such a manual rather than posted or offered elsewhere.

The respondent disagrees partially with the finding, since the wide-ranging term "inadequate" was used. While meeting the needs of minors detained in the Juvenile Hall there is always room for improvement. Successful detention experiences do occur with the varied methods use by Juvenile Hall staff to convey the rules. Historically, there has always been more than one method for the sharing of information with minors. For example, each minor is provided information concerning rules and policies through a personal review process during booking. Once assigned to a living unit an additional method of information is provided as each minor is required to complete an open-book written quiz. During this information sharing method minors are also encouraged to ask staff any questions they may have while going over the result of the minor's quiz with them. At this time, staff will also attempt to assess the minors understanding of the information they have been provided. Each minor has access to a binder in each of the living units for reference, and is encouraged by staff to ask questions concerning any rules a minor might question. The Grand Jury is correct in referencing the white boards in the living units as each board does hold a large number of sheets of paper containing rules and policies. The white board style bulletin boards should be designed better and made less confusing for minors. Additionally, each minor should be provided a personal copy of the rules and policies that also include the grievance process.

F2. The Grand Jury finds great potential in the development of transitioning programs such as the Boys and Girls Clubs' project at Juvenile Hall.

The respondent agrees with the finding.

Recommendations

R1 A thoughtfully organized manual providing useful, pertinent as well as mandated information at a readable level should be constructed and used, in lieu of the current method of posting, to ensure that all wards have access to critical information during their detention. A Spanish edition should also be written at a proper comprehension level.

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By K. Meitner Deputy

The recommendation will be implemented. Minors will be given individual manuals, and a Spanish edition will be made available. The postings themselves are in the process of revision, and will continue to be used as part of an orientation process occurring each morning with newly-arrived minors. A committee of line staff and supervisors convened in late July to review orientation procedures, postings of rules, rule binders, and programming. Implementation has already begun following certain revisions of the various methods we use to convey rules and policies. By October 1, 2008 all Grand Jury recommendations will have been implemented.



John M. Wardell
Chief Probation Officer