

Nevada State Juvenile Justice Commission
Policy/Legislation Committee Report

Attachment D

Regional Facility Planning Subcommittee
Supreme Court Commission on Juvenile Justice Reform
September 4, 2014

Recommendations for Northern Nevada Regional Facility

Chief Scott J. Shick President NAJJA
August 27, 2014

1. NYTC Elko is designated as the juvenile commitment/treatment facility for the Northern Nevada Region.
2. NYTC receive funding for reasonable prioritized capital improvement projects directly related to the functioning and support of the 60 bed commitment/treatment program and that a full evaluation of the facility be completed to determine which buildings would not be used as part of the routine facility dynamic.
3. NYTC receive the necessary funding to bring back Nevada Interscholastic Athletic Association sanctioned sports programs and opportunities to Independence High School including transportation cost, uniform cost, and equipment cost necessary to support a positive athletic experience.
4. That NYTC complete a full cost analysis of and be approved for a Family Systems Program, on grounds and in Northern Region communities, including transportation to and from the NYTC facility. Keeping in line with the Nevada model juvenile justice treatment supporting family-systems improvement.
5. That NYTC provide a quality assurance component (much like Red Rock Academy has that reports directly to the deputy administrator) that will ensure compliance with all of the policies, procedures and general health, safety and welfare matters at the facility. Establishment of an advisory committee of community members will assist with achieving good public relations and increasing positive community service involvement of students and staff in the community.

Summary

Numerous ongoing discussions have been held across the state regarding the regionalization of juvenile services in the preservation of an effective continuum of care for juvenile justice in the state of Nevada. Recognizing the difficulties of coordinating a bifurcated state/county juvenile justice system, we have managed to prioritize our needs, purpose, and strategies to provide effective accountability, intervention, treatment and outcomes.

After a thorough review of the Nevada youth training center (see site visit report) in Elko, Nevada. It is recommended that this facility, with in a 60 bed capacity, remain in operation to serve the youth committed to states custody in the northern region juvenile jurisdictions. It is recognized that the facility is effectively meeting behavioral and treatment needs of this population that has been committed to states custody.

It needs to be recognized that the administration, staff, student, and community culture installed in this program is effective and organized. It also needs to be recognized that attempts to duplicate this culture would be extremely difficult, if these services were moved to any other location.

It should also be recognized that the facility infrastructure has improved progressively over the course of the last four years. If capital improvement projects are reasonable and properly prioritized it will be a facility that can be used for years to come. It is recommended that only buildings and grounds necessary to serve a 60 bed commitment population be used and subject to prioritized improvements to facilitate the program.

The Nevada model for juvenile justice calls for family involvement in all levels of the continuum of care provided by the jurisdictions in the state. This is based on the families' ability to provide positive structure and direction. Effective family and community involvement are essential components to youth returning home from residential treatment facilities. It was evident in our tour of NYTC that the commitment population is comprised of primarily older juveniles, 16 and 17-year-olds. The presentation showed that this population needs academic achievement, life skills/vocational training, community involvement, and transitional preparation. One third, if not more, of the current caseload family in the system was questionable as a protective factor for the youth looking to return home as a functional contributing member of their community and family.

Nevada Youth training center in Elko can operate as a northern region commitment facility. They are specialists and experts in providing correctional/treatment services for juveniles committed to states custody. Sixty treatment beds should be the maximum considered for this facility now and in years to come. The northern region commitments are typically around 40 to 45 youth. The fact that Clark County has potential commitment youth for the northern facility still needs to be taken into consideration with respect to the population numbers at the NYTC facility. What happens to this Clark County population has yet to be seen, but needs to be recognized for purposes of this ongoing dialogue.

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Review of the site visit to NYTC Elko, August 20, 2014
Nevada Juvenile Justice Commission
Chief Scott J. Shick
Chair Policy and Legislation Committee

The Nevada juvenile justice=s commission met at the NYTC in Elko, Nevada on August 20 and 21st. The meeting was held in the dining room of the facility and hosted by the culinary department of the facility. A wholesome variety of food was presented, indicative of what the student population is presented on a daily basis.

Commission members have the opportunity touring the facility and seeing firsthand the daily functions and routine of the commitment treatment program system.

What stood out in the beginning and prevailed throughout the two day meeting/review of the facility was the positive culture and rapport observed in all aspects of the facility.

Administrative staff, administrative support staff, academic staff, and program staff were involved and interactive with the youth population in all aspects of the program. It was obvious that the majority of the staff were involved, knowledgeable, and personally invested in the job that they were doing.

Observation and review of the facility grounds and buildings. One could see that there has been attention to detail and a conscientious effort has been made to improve the campus infrastructure.

The commission members were given presentations by Mr. Joel Bridgegum - head Group Supervisor, Mr. Greg Thorton - Mental Health Counselor, Mr. Russell Klein - Independence High School Principal, and Mr. Richard Gloeckner - Superintendent of NYTC. Each of these administrators presented in their specific area of program responsibility. It was obvious that each of them held a strong academic and working knowledge of their area of expertise. The presentations reflected strategies in each of their areas that directly benefit the youth committed to the facility. Each of the members displayed dedication and passion for the work they do with Nevada youth.

The daily routine and structure provided by the facility was consistent, strategic, and effective. In talking with boys throughout the tour it was obvious that they were being impacted in one way or another by the particular program element that they were involved with. The school, classrooms, and its teachers were impressive. Students in the classrooms were involved in working on their individualized academic program. The majority of activities in the facility are centered around the school schedule which includes vocational, physical education, and community service.

Review of the dormitories. The dormitories were clean and organized. The dorms are designed in the rotunda-fashion which is easy to supervise from the centralized location of the staff in the

buildings.

Interviewing students in the dorms. The students discussed their responsibilities in their personal areas; laundry and daily chore and routine assignments. When questioned regarding their overall program involvement answers ranged from, I'm doing what I have to do to get through this to once I figured out that the staff is working *with* me, I am actually getting something out of this place. When students were questioned regarding accountability, sanctions, and discipline, the responses varied from, they dog you here to once you accept the fact that you need to be here you actually like the structure because it helps you get your life on track.

Final note. In discussing the program with five (5) of the staff members, all stated that when the more serious offenders were removed to Red Rock Academy it allowed them to focus more on the boys that the facility was designed to treat. I believe this is a very important observation based on our ongoing discussions regarding continuum of care, assessment to place the right person in the right system to get the best results.

In my conversation with Mr. Richard Gloeckner, Elko NYTC Facility Superintendent, he expressed his concern regarding the impressions that boys sent to the facility are a "lost cause" and that Elko NYTC is viewed as merely a holding-ground for these boys prior to entering the adult system. Mr. Gloeckner is concerned by the apparent impression that the legislature and the juvenile justice community have regarded Elko NYTC as expendable and ineffective. Mr. Gloeckner is aware that this information (impression) is shared in the Elko and the surrounding communities. Compounded by a workforce that is impacted by the influence of mining, he is also concerned that qualified persons are not applying to NYTC as a result of the rumors and discussion regarding closure of the facility. Mr. Gloeckner is committed to continuing the effective treatment-components of the Elko facility. He added that the perspective of his assignments to numerous state juvenile justice facilities and his commitment to providing individualized, effective services for all kids and families has never changed, no matter where he was located.

In asking Mr. Gloeckner about the current investigations being held regarding the restraint of juveniles in the facility, he was not able to comment because of the ongoing investigation. We did discuss in general terms our responsibility to youth in our care; that the control and intervention with angry, hostile, and potentially assaultive behaviors begins with staff, students and program rapport. An effective program designed specifically to serve the individualized needs of the students is the most effective manner of reducing anxiety, anger, and hostility in any residential treatment facility.

The Nevada Youth Training Center in Elko, Nevada is currently operating with a 60 bed capacity in an effective, strategic manner. Their ability to provide the individualized treatment needs of youth in their care is obvious in the observation and verification of the program and outcomes for youth who have been committed to state custody. The facility infrastructure is improving in a prioritized manner. The operations and logistics of the overall program are well-managed in a fiscally responsible manner. The facility provides effective accountability, programming, and structure necessary for students to make demonstrated and consistent behavior changes in their lives.