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County Selects Members for Newly Established Juvenile Justice Systems Collaborative

Group to Meet for the First Time on Wednesday, September 17

SAN JOSE-CALIF.—County Executive Pete Kutas announced this week that members have been selected for the newly-formed Juvenile Justice System's Collaborative (JJSC). The first meeting will take place at the Board of Supervisors' Chambers, at the County Government Center, 70 West Hedding Street, in San José, on Wednesday, September 17, at 6:00 p.m. At that time, members and their named alternates will take an Oath of Office and begin discussions.

"Over the past few years we have made tremendous progress in reshaping our juvenile detention system," said County Executive Pete Kutas. "The Juvenile Justice System Collaborative will advance this work by developing a model blueprint for at-risk youth that addresses prevention and rehabilitation."

A community council created to oversee process improvement and implementation efforts of the County's Juvenile Detention Reform, the Collaborative will meet quarterly and report on a regular basis to the Board of Supervisors through the Public Safety and Justice Committee. Members will identify actions needed based on interventions in rehabilitation and prevention that are proven to work with minors in the Juvenile Justice System.

"The Collaborative will rely on stakeholders and youth advocates to identify and create opportunities for prevention and rehabilitation for our juvenile offenders," said Supervisor Ken Yeager, Vice Chair of the Public Safety and Justice Committee. "I am looking forward to innovative approaches from the Collaborative that will reinforce the efforts and accomplishments of Juvenile Detention Reform."

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Under the new Collaborative a different organizational structure will continue the Juvenile Detention Reform efforts now underway. Together, two working groups will develop strategies to prevent and reduce the unnecessary detention of minors. The first group will target early intervention and programs that serve the youth in the County. The second one will target improving system processes for minors' cases in court, such as more expedient handling of cases and encouraging alternatives to detention.

"This Juvenile Systems Collaborative will address the needs of our youth in the Juvenile Justice System, said Probation Chief Sheila Mitchell. "Prevention continues to be an integral part of our efforts to stop the trend of youth becoming engaged or permanently trapped in delinquent behavior."

Assignment of membership to this collaborative was delegated by the Board of Supervisors to the County Executive. Current membership spans the duration of the collaborative, until it expires on June 30, 2011, and will include the following community members, officials or their named alternatives.

1. County Executive Pete Kutas
2. Chief Probation Officer Sheila Mitchell
3. County Counsel Ann Ravel
4. Bob Garner, Director, Dept of Drug & Alcohol Services
5. Nancy Peña, Director, Mental Health Department
6. Will Lightbourne, Director, Social Services Agency
7. District Attorney Dolores Carr
8. Police Chief Bruce Cumming, President, Santa Clara County Police Chief's Association
9. Presiding Judge Patrick Tondreau, Santa Clara County Superior Court
10. Public Defender Mary Greenwood
11. Sheriff Laurie Smith
12. San Jose Police Department Chief Rob Davis, Mayor's Gang Prevention Task Force
13. Dr. Charles Weis, Superintendent, County Office of Education
14. Bob Nunez, Superintendent, East Side Union High School District (A school district)
15. Dolores Morales, CEMA Representative
16. Kristy Sermersheim, President, SEIU, Local 521
17. Mark Murray, President, Local 1587 Santa Clara County Probation Peace Officers' Union
18. Patricia Gardner, Executive Director, Silicon Valley Council of Non-Profits
19. Leon Beauchman, Parent Advocate
20. Lisa Zack, FACES, Victim Witness Assistance Center for Silicon Valley (Victim advocate)
21. Raul Colunga, La Raza Roundtable – Youth Advocacy Organization
22. Aila Malik, Fresh Lifelines for Youth (FLY), (Youth Advocate)
23. Laura Champion, EMQ Children and Family Services, (Youth or Youth Representative)
24. Sparky Harlan, Bill Wilson Center, (Youth Service Provider)
25. Rev. Matt Munoz, Youth Pastor, Mt. Pleasant Christian Center, Faith-Based Organization (FBO).

On the Juvenile Justice Systems Collaborative (JJSC)

The County of Santa Clara Juvenile Justice Systems Collaborative (JJSC) is a community council focusing on collaboration among the Juvenile Courts, Probation, District Attorney, the Public Defender, local governments, law enforcement, schools and community based service providers. Comprised of 25 members, the collaborative will be dedicated to preventing youth from penetrating the juvenile justice system, continuously improving processes within the system; and ensuring the deployment of evidence-based practices to more effectively rehabilitate youth. The collaborative is chaired by the County Executive and supported by the Clerk of the Board of Supervisors.

Juvenile Detention Reform - Background

Established in 2002, the county's Juvenile Detention Reform teams made much progress in the past six years. The work groups successfully implemented countywide the Police Booking Protocol and created the Detention Risk Assessment Instrument (Detention RAI). These changes have decreased the total number of referrals to Juvenile Hall and the detention of the youth referred.

Juvenile Detention Reform also identified other efforts that may help reduce the disproportionate representation of minorities detained within the juvenile justice system. The Community Release (CRP) and Electronic Monitoring Programs (EMP) and the Alternative Placement Academy (APA) were among the earliest alternatives to detention (ATD), implemented before JDR began, and the most recent alternative, the Evening Reporting Center (ERC), opened its doors in September 2006.

Specific goals set by JDR were to use data to determine where there are opportunities to reduce the unnecessary and inappropriate detention of youth; Create and use alternatives to detention; Reduce disproportionate minority confinement; Reduce unnecessary delay in case processing; Reduce unnecessary and inappropriate detention of youth; Control the Juvenile Hall "front gate" by developing and implementing effective admissions policies and practices; Improve conditions of confinement; Engage impacted parents and youth; Develop ombudsman type services for juvenile justice system (later dropped as a goal); Conduct public forums to better understand community concerns; Help inform the JDR planning and implementation process; and Improve community understanding of the juvenile justice system.

Many other goals were achieved over the course of JDR. The Enhanced Ranch Program and the Life Skills Unit have directly impacted the conditions of confinement of youth and are another example of the process changes established by this initiative.

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