

Loren Buddress, Chief Probation Officer

PROBATION DEPARTMENT





*Making a Difference*

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COUNTY OF SAN MATEO

Date: June 1, 2001  
Hearing Date: June 19, 2001

TO: Honorable Board of Supervisors

FROM:  Loren Buddress, Chief Probation Officer  
 Don Horsley, Sheriff

SUBJECT: Turning Point Academy

RECOMMENDATION:

Adopt a Resolution authorizing the Chief Probation Officer to place applicable San Mateo County youth in the Turning Point Academy, pursuant to Sections 731.3 and 796 of the California Welfare and Institutions Code, in order to enhance public safety and to prepare youth for productive and successful lives.

Background

The passage of SB 1542 in September 2000 tasked the California National Guard to establish and operate a six-month residential academy for first-time juvenile offenders who have committed a firearms related offense on a California school campus or at a school sponsored event off-campus. The Guard accepted the mission and was prepared to receive the first wards (Cadets) from California's 58 counties at the Camp San Luis Obispo facility in February 2001. In preparing for opening the academy, the Guard researched and visited several juvenile detention facilities in an effort to provide best practices and an program that focuses on key areas found to be successful in changing behaviors and ensuring public safety in the residential juvenile detention setting.

During the 1990's, millions of federal dollars were released under the National Crime Bill and funded various alternative sentencing programs and facilities. A number of "boot camp" models were instituted because of the long-held belief that the use of military structure and discipline in a youth detention facility is a positive change-agent in addressing juvenile crime at detention facilities. As of January 2001, 23 of California's 58 counties had operational juvenile camp facilities, many of which are considered a military-style boot camp model.

Each county that operates a boot camp most likely selected the boot camp model because of funding motivations (acquisition of federal grant monies) or a philosophical belief that some degree of a military or "shock incarceration" program will assist in impacting these youth. Whatever the motivation, many counties embarked on the juvenile boot camp train with a vision and mission that has significantly changed and evolved through lessons learned.

The juvenile populations currently incarcerated at the camps differ greatly between counties. Most county run boot camps focus on either juvenile multiple offenders or limited first-time offenders, and utilize the county boot camp as a placement measure prior to referral to the California Youth Authority (CYA). Many counties operate progressive boot camp-like programs, which have the appropriate operational oversight, comprehensive individual youth plans, specific academic goals and objectives, an emphasis on job skills and vocational training, effective drug and alcohol treatment, mental health treatment, and aftercare programs required to be accountable for reducing juvenile crime incidence and reduce the recidivism of these populations. Some counties operate the camps as a juvenile crime-deterrent, focusing on first-time offenders and short stays. In several county-run boot camps a heavy reliance on military disciplinary measures and strict structures often lack the significant program services that will make real, long-term changes in a youth's cognitive decision making abilities. In these settings, youth will often return to their home setting and quickly return to the old behaviors, peers, and conduct patterns that got them into trouble in the first place.

What, then, makes the Turning Point Academy different? This program specifically targets first-time juvenile offenders who commit firearm crimes on school campuses or school-sponsored events off campus. Both the specific population to be served and the comprehensive program design will take Turning Point Academy away from experimental "boot camps" and provide for a high-caliber, proven program option available to counties who choose to participate which includes the following components:

- **Individualized Comprehensive Programming Plan** (specific goals and objectives, personal responsibility, high accountability, high standards.)
- **Full assessment process at intake;** academic, social-emotional, drug testing, health screening, vocational; assessment, mental health screening, alcohol/drug screening (assessors include credentialed teachers, state licensed mental health staff, and a licensed physician).
- **On-going individual assessments** throughout the residential phase at Camp San Luis Obispo.
- **Mental health treatment services** for individuals and small groups.
- **Substance and alcohol abuse treatment and education services** for individuals and small groups.

- **High school curriculum** utilizing the California State Standards and Frameworks with a focus on the core curricular subjects of Mathematics, English/Language Arts, History/Social Science, Science, and prep for the California High School Exit Examination this program has been approved by the Secretary for Education.
- **Vocational training** may be provided for cadets who are academically prepared.
- **Modulated program** that provides for specific phases of a Cadet's six-month residential experience. (Basic Cadet, Junior Cadet, Advanced Cadet, Senior Cadet.)
- A program that **focuses on cognitive change** (decision-making) and not solely on behavioral change, which is based in group dynamics and on individual choices, the responsibility and accountability of those choices and how choices effect the individual and others.
- **Academy oversight** provided by the California Board of Corrections (Title 15 and 24), and an 11-member Advisory Committee.
- **Transition Phase and Aftercare Components** prior to leaving six-month residential setting.

#### Discussion

Although the legislation creating the California Turning Point Academy is quite restrictive as to who qualifies for placement, Sheriff Horsley and I both believe San Mateo County should support the program. Although it is unlikely any county will have more than a very small number of eligible juveniles per year, it does provide the Court with another option for handling juvenile firearm cases which is beneficial for certain juvenile offenders, the Court, the Probation Department, and County residents.

#### Fiscal Impact

The fiscal impact for San Mateo County is negligible. All expenses for maintaining juveniles at the Turning Point Academy are borne by the state. The only anticipated costs for the County would be the supervision expense for the juvenile in already established Aftercare programs once the juvenile has been released from Turning Point. Further, depending upon the number of juveniles referred to the program, there could be some savings in California Youth Authority (CYA) costs if they were sent to the Academy in lieu of going to the CYA.

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COUNTY OF SAN MATEO

RESOLUTION NO. \_\_\_\_\_

BOARD OF SUPERVISORS, COUNTY OF SAN MATEO, STATE OF CALIFORNIA

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RESOLUTION AUTHORIZING  
THE CHIEF PROBATION OFFICER TO PLACE APPLICABLE YOUTH FROM  
SAN MATEO COUNTY IN TURNING POINT ACADEMY  
PURSUANT TO SECTION 731.3, AND SECTION 796 OF THE WELFARE AND  
INSTITUTIONS CODE

## RESOLUTION

### TURNING POINT ACADEMY

Whereas the State of California has authorized the establishment of Turning Point Academy for the purpose of providing a comprehensive and meaningful military academy experience for minors residing in California who are fifteen years of age or older **and who have committed an offense as specified in Section 731.3 of the Welfare and Institutions Code.**

Whereas each county of the State of California must adopt a resolution making Section 731.3 and Section 796 of the Welfare and Institutions code applicable to that county before it can send youth to Turning Point Academy;

Whereas the Board of Supervisors of San Mateo County, California intends to authorize the placement of applicable youth in Turning Point Academy in order to enhance public safety, and to prepare youth for productive and successful lives by fostering self esteem, self discipline, and personal accountability as individuals; developing constructive social and community affiliation; and providing academic and vocational education training.

Resolved that the Board of Supervisors of San Mateo County, California in Turning Point Academy and agrees to comply with all of the requirements of Section 731.3 Section 796 of the Welfare and Institutions Code.