

# EL DORADO COUNTY PROBATION DEPARTMENT

## MEMORANDUM

**TO:** Juvenile Justice Coordinating Council Members

**FROM:** Brian J. Richart, Chief Probation Officer

**DATE:** March 12, 2015

**RE:** Community Alliance to Reduce Truancy (CART) Program

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By receipt of this memorandum, you are being identified as a member of the Juvenile Justice Coordinating Council (JJCC). The JJCC is being reconvened as required by statute in the Juvenile Justice Crime Prevention Act (JJCPA) of 2000.

### History

The JJCPA enables California counties to receive funding, through the Board of State and Community Corrections (BSCC), for juvenile justice programs. On October 26, 2000, your council was established and approved the recommendation of the Probation Officer to implement the Community Alliance to Reduce Truancy (CART) Program. On March 26, 2001, upon receipt of the first allocation of funding from BSCC, the CART Program became operational. Each year since 2001, your council has reconvened and supported the continuation of the CART Program.

### Current Status

During the last program year, the CART Program continued with no substantive changes to program goals. Currently, there is one Supervising Deputy Probation Officer that oversees the program, a Senior Deputy Probation Officer (part-time) and four Deputy Probation Officers assigned to supervise juvenile offenders and act as a resource at ten El Dorado County high schools. Deputy Probation Officers providing services at each of the schools continue to be a part of the campus culture, developing alliances and partnerships with students and their parents, teachers, school administrators, law enforcement, and the community. Our schools value the presence of a Deputy Probation Officer on their respective campuses and are hopeful the partnership that has developed over the last fourteen years continues.

### Results

The JJCPA legislation identified specific outcome areas to be measured and required reports on these measurements to be provided annually to BSCC and the El Dorado County Board of Supervisors (BOS). BSCC created an Internet-based system for these annual reports. The outcome areas to be measured in the CART Program include attendance and grades at school, payment of restitution and fines, completion of community service work, completion of probation, rate of arrest and incarceration, and rate of violations of probation. Since the inception of the CART Program, all annual reports have been approved by BSCC and the BOS.

In the past, our measurable goals have trended toward positive outcomes. In the last program year, four outcomes were met (arrest rate, incarceration rate, complete of probation rate and rate of completion of restitution) while four outcomes were not met (completion of community

service rate, probation violation rate, education-academic achievement and education attendance).

A significant change regarding how attendance information is released occurred in the past year. Probation officers no longer have immediate computerized access to attendance information. Since this change, the statistics have shown a significant increase in unexcused absences as officers are unable to immediately respond to truancy. There were several encouraging global results. The overall "arrest rate," which includes both violations and new law offenses, is statistically the same from the previous year. However, arrests for new law violations are significantly lower, while arrests for violations of probation are significantly higher, suggesting that increased supervision may contribute to a reduction in new crimes being committed. In the "community service" category, the 2012/2013 year had an outstanding 70.3% rate of completion. While this year's rate of 64.3% rate of completion is statistically less, close to two-thirds of the participants still completed their community service obligations. In the area of "education-academic achievement," overall the GPA was down to 2.0 compared to 2.2 from the previous year; however, the starting GPA of participants was 1.8 compared to 2.0 from the previous year. Therefore, an increase of .2 was consistent. Overall, the data supports the CART program's success in raising educational performance, restoring victims, assisting minors to complete probation successfully and reducing delinquency in the community.

### **Proposed Modification**

For the past fourteen years, the population served by the CART Program has been defined by the schools identified as having the majority of "at-risk" youth and students who are receiving probation services. Schools have been added to, and dropped from, the program as those populations have changed. As a result, the population served by the program has been limited to the identified schools, even though the Probation Department provides similar probation services to youth throughout the county. With declining populations of delinquent youth, the proposed modification to the CART program will be to expand to all students receiving services who are in a seat based school program, regardless of the school each attends.

While there will not be a Deputy Probation Officer assigned to each school in the county, the four officers assigned to provide service at the ten schools, as indicated above, will not change. For a student attending any other school or assigned to our Juvenile Drug Court Program, an officer is assigned to provide services to each student, regardless of which school the student attends.

### **Evaluation**

The services and actions of the Deputy Probation Officers assigned to the CART Program schools have continued to assist juvenile offenders with improving school attendance, school behavior, and academic performance. The CART Program identifies appropriate services for youth and their families, holds juveniles accountable to their conditions of probation, and continually strives to deter future delinquent activity. The CART Program also continues to assist in establishing and maintaining collaborative alliances with the school and community to assess and provide appropriate services for families and "at-risk" youth who are not under probation supervision, providing safer schools and neighborhoods throughout El Dorado County.

### **Recommendation**

Due to the continued success of the CART Program as indicated above, it is recommended the CART Program continue at the level supported by available funding.