

Youth Trauma & Justice Solutions

Monique Khumalo, Ph.D.
395 Redding Road, UNIT 52
Lexington, Kentucky 40517
567-868-9606

Monique.Khumalo@youthtjs.com



Alameda County Probation Department SB823 Environmental Recommendations - February 2022

In November of 2021, Monique Khumalo, PhD of Youth Trauma & Justice Solutions assessed the Alameda County Juvenile Hall and Camp Wilmont Sweeney in order to provide recommendations related to the placement and development of the SB823 program. The majority of this report is related to recommendations for the use of the current Juvenile Hall. The rationale for this decision is included in the review of Camp Wilmont Sweeney at the end of this report.

Population Considerations:

Initial estimates of youth population were derived from Alameda County Probation Departments analysis of the California Department of Juvenile Justice (DJJ) data for Alameda County youth released in 2019. This initial data projected the number of youth assigned to the program could vary from as few as 5 or 6 to as many as 15. The average age of youth on the program was estimated to be 17, with an average length of stay of 2.8 years. However, the youth who are charged with more serious offenses were noted to serve longer sentences. According to the 2019 data, youth charged for 1st degree murder served an average of 47 months, manslaughter 41 months and Assault with Intent 42 months. Unfortunately, the homicide rate for the Bay Area, like other major cities, rose 20% in 2020. Given this Bay Area data it is expected that the number of youth and the average length of stay may rise over the course of the next year. The number of youth in the program is already beginning to reflect that trend. In the 6 months since the program opened, five youth have been assigned to the program and in January of 2022 another four were awaiting trial or sentencing. If more youth are charged with these more serious offenses, youth could be committed for well over 3 years resulting in what will hopefully be a temporary increase in the average daily population to closer to 20 youth.

The SB823 program must also accommodate other population variables. The potential age span for youth in the program could be 14 to 22 or 23 years of age. There is a possibility that the SB823 program could need to stretch further to serve females, given that plans to serve the female population are yet to be determined. Though this may be a possibility, it is continually recommended that a more appropriate alternative plan can be reached with the other Bay Area counties to ensure that the needs of the female population are not compromised by the small numbers and challenge to develop a separate female program in a facility that largely serves males. Given these factors, the living area(s) should provide the greatest level of flexibility to accommodate shifts in population demographics and developmental needs. It is evident that the program will require more than one “housing unit” and several program areas. Planning with

flexibility in mind will allow the program to have the capacity to appropriately serve each youth's needs. The initial plan for the program allocated one living unit for youth which is currently one of the larger units, unit 3, but if the numbers meet or exceed 15 youth a singular living unit may not serve the diverse needs of youth and the enhanced array of service providers.

Overview of recommendations for Primary Living Community/Dormitory:

Given the age and developmental needs of youth the living and programming spaces should attempt to include elements of modern-day college campuses. The primary living units should be thought of as the youth's "home community/dorm". Today's dormitories are built with individual rooms for youth with their own bathroom and shared shower area. Individual rooms allow youth privacy, self-expression via wall art or pictures, and space to secure their belongings. The common space on the pod like the common space in a dorm is built for socialization with other students, watching TV, making snacks or meals or playing games and holding dorm meetings.

In the vision of this campus community, youth would leave their "home community/dormitory" for extended periods of time throughout the day for meals, education, vocational opportunities, therapy, group programming, visitation and recreation. This decreases the mental health impact of constant exposure to the same space. The phenomenon of "cabin fever" can be experienced as depression, anxiety, anhedonia and irritability. Exposure to a variety of spaces and activities increases a youth's capacity for growth and improves mental well-being. At the moment unit 3 houses the youth and most programs for the SB823 program. This is the largest of the three units earmarked for this population. If unit 3 is the primary living unit youth would move each day to smaller units for programming on units 9 and 11 or receive a bulk of their programming on unit 3 which is also where they sleep, thus increasing the time in the "same" living space.

Specific Recommendations:

1. Use the smaller housing units 9 and 11 as the primary housing units. These units are smaller than unit 3, but they are equivalent in size and adjoin one another to allow opportunities to locate all youth on the SB823 program in the same general area while providing the larger unit 3 as a space for a majority of the day time programming and activities. Should there be a need to house youth based upon classification designation to include program level, age, gender or other placement or classification need the units may flexibly be used to serve these populations without either population feeling they have been slighted by being placed on a smaller unit. If only one of the housing units is needed the second housing unit is easily accessible to use "flexibly" for programming and office space which is significantly limited in this environment.
2. Unit 3 has the greatest number of office spaces and multi-use rooms. This makes it optimal for use to house programs. All youth could be in this area for extended periods of the day. This larger space is capable of meeting their diverse and individual needs for education, vocational programming, groups and individual sessions. This also makes it suitable for family visitation, speakers and events for the entire SB 823 program. While it

is not initially suggested that this space house youth, future use could incorporate an honor living space on the upper floors or double rooms. These would be like the resident advisor rooms. These rooms could be assigned to youth preparing to return to the community and have home passes or work in the community. They would have the privilege to be provided with more typical items for use in their own rooms. They may also be responsible for serving as peer mentors/program co-facilitators and for the upkeep of the common program space. The challenge of unit 3 is that it has an extremely large open area without many walls. The recommendation for this area will be to consider what programming needs to occur and create spaces that make sense for these activities. This will be addressed later in this document.

Recommended modifications to Units 9 and 11:

These smaller units are similar with the exception that Unit 9 has had a conversion to include a functional kitchen with stove in the food prep area. These units have already begun a partial renovation. The unit doors and walls have been painted in the same color throughout which reduces the emphasis on the “cell” doors and reduces the overall institutional/correctional appearance of the space. In addition, in the common areas there are carpet squares that have been placed on the floor and furniture or tables that can be flexibly moved to accommodate multiple uses on the dorm. Many units like this are plagued by large metal tables bolted to the ground which limits how the common area can be used and increases the noise level on the units. Forethought by the planning team and architects avoided this common limitation.

Unit Configuration

- Six single rooms on the ground level (rooms 1-6) and six single rooms on the upper level (12 – 17).
- Six double rooms on the ground floor and six double rooms on the upper level (rooms 8-11 and rooms 19 – 22)
- One ADA accessible room (room 7) on the ground floor and a larger single room in the same space on the upper floor (room 18).
- Combined food prep room with interview/sick call room at the rear. The food prep area on Unit 11 has already been converted to a kitchen with an actual stove as well as refrigerator and sink
- Large Medical exam room
- A small haircare area
- Interview/sick call room on upper level with a counseling room on the lower level.
- Outdoor gym/court area with mural on the wall above and a caged ceiling that allows the only natural light for the entire unit as there are no windows to the exterior in youth rooms.

Unit 9 and 11 Observations:

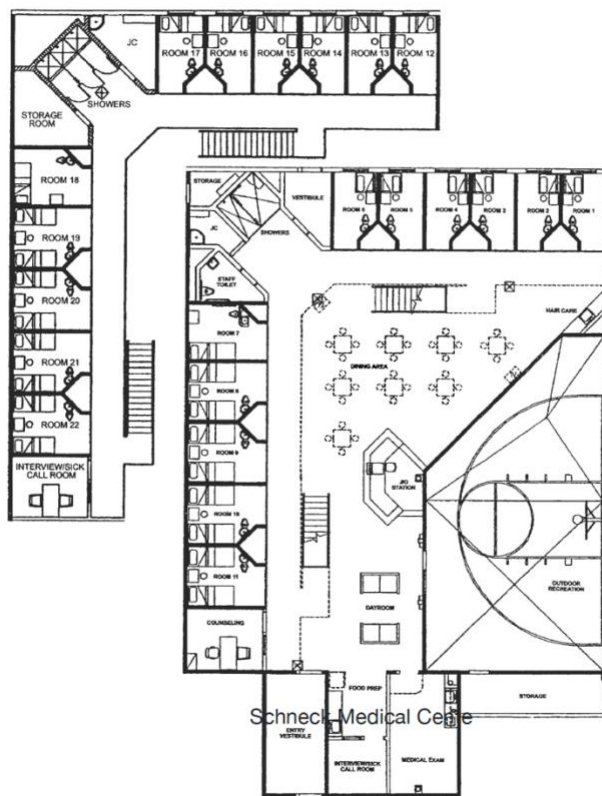
Units 9 and 11 are currently being used as program spaces for school and groups. One of the downsides of units 9 and 11 serving as program spaces is their size and lack of multipurpose room or meeting space. If these units are used for programming this would need to occur in the

one main common area or potentially a converted medical area. Neither have a multipurpose room or group room which is not optimal when not all youth are participating in the group or activity. If these units become the living units there is an ability to use the common area for total group activities like rise circles and check ins, television area with comfortable seating for leisure recreation in the evenings and on weekends. The small offices can be used as needed to speak with youth privately or conduct small groups.

Unit 9 and 11 Recommendations:

1. Convert these two units to living units.
2. Unit 9 has 2 ground floor office/interview spaces and unit 11 only has 1 ground floor office space because the interview room behind the food prep area has been joined to create a kitchen. Each has 1 interview room on the upper level for a total of 5 office/meeting room spaces. Behavioral Health will need a designated office on one of the adjoining living units to allow for them to comply with security of mental health records.

UNIT 9



Thus, one office on either unit 9 or 11 could be designated for the behavioral health clinician and then use one office space could be designated for the Unit Supervisor and may actually be located on the top floor. The remaining office areas could be used for interviews or small groups with COVID considerations in place during the current pandemic.

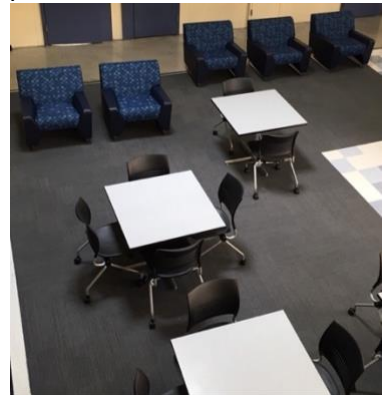
3. Maintain the recreation area courtyard as it is for youth to recreate in the evenings or on breaks as they desire. This outdoor space could also be used at times for smaller unit gatherings, meals/barbecues that may be unit based and for visitation as desired. Flexible tables and seating should be available for this purpose.

4. There is currently a rather

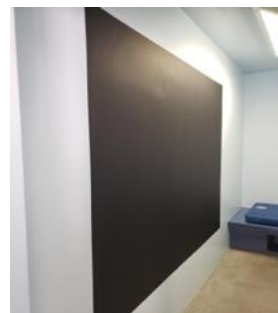
large room that is designated for medical. Given that the facility has a medical office it seems this is a wasted use of a very large space. It is recommended that this room be converted to a flexible use group room and TV area for the program.

5. **The food prep area** could be maintained so that youth can have reasonable access to snacks and small meals throughout the day. The transparent lockers could be placed near this area as well to allow youth to store their food items for later use.
6. **The dayroom/common area** is currently drawn next to the food prep area I would recommend using that space as a dining/game table space with 3 - 4 small tables that can seat four youth each. These tables could be placed together to allow all youth to sit together or engage in a group activity. This encourages keeping food items in a designated area designed with flooring that is easy to sweep and clean.

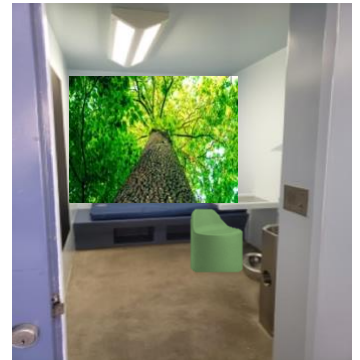
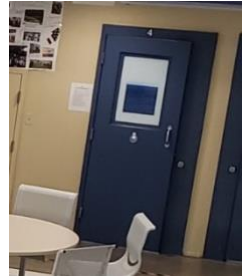
The day room could then be moved to the other side of the unit with recommended carpet flooring. Flexible seating like what is currently on Unit 3 and pictured here.



7. **Unit Capacity**- It is unfortunate that some rooms are built as double rooms because all youth should be housed in single rooms. There are 7 available single rooms on the ground level of each of the units to include the ADA accessible room. To accommodate more youth on the unit it is recommended that the four double rooms be converted to single rooms which will allow for a total of 11 rooms on the ground level. Eleven youth per unit seems an optimal upper limit number for the program given the common area spaces are smaller. Use of the upper tier should be a last resort for housing youth due to the challenges of room checks and risk of youth jumping or pushing others over the railing. If populations increase and there is a need to house more youth on each unit, the upper tier could be designated as honor rooms for youth who have achieved certain programmatic goals. The treatment team could place youth there that they believe are responsible enough to be placed on the upper tier. Exceeding 16 youth per is not recommended due to the limited common area space. Sixteen youth per unit would also allow for PREA consistent 1:8 daytime staffing ratio and 1:16 evening staffing ratio.
8. **Room Design** – Alameda County has already begun to incorporate some important design elements into youth rooms to allow the room to feel more like a dorm room than a cell.
 - a. The current set up with a chalkboard paint square on one wall allows youth to write inspirational pieces on the wall or keep track of schoolwork or program tasks. There is also a writing desk and each room has its own toilet/sink combination.

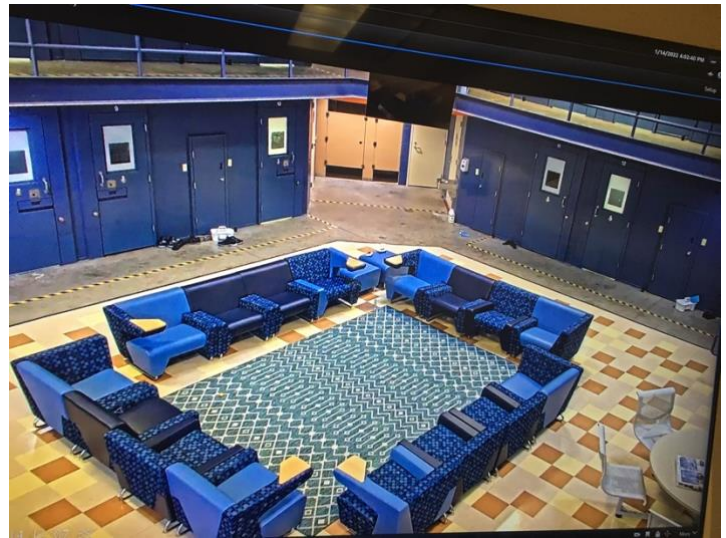
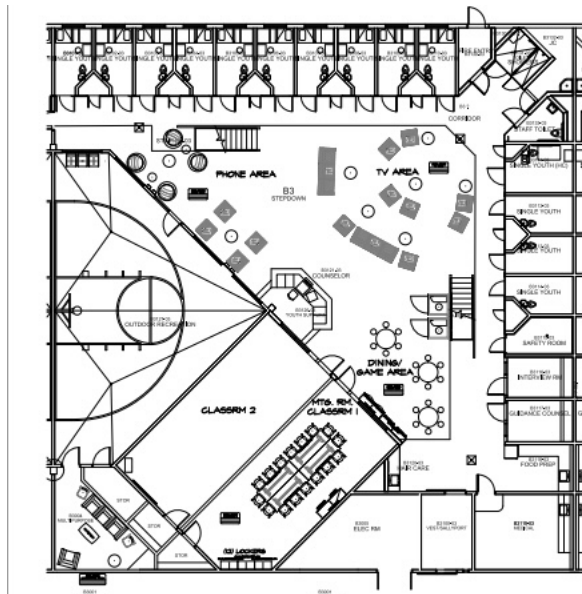


- b. **Room door windows** are designed to let in the light from large windows on the opposing wall of the enclosed recreation area. However, it also reduces the level of privacy for the youth while in the room. Alameda County Probation has already provided small window coverings that decrease the size of the viewing area to provide privacy to youth when dressing or undressing or using the restroom without sacrificing a safe viewing area for room checks.
- c. **Lighting** in youth rooms is rather institutional and very bright. In most facilities this creates issues around youth attempting to cover the lights with paper or toothpaste or other items to reduce the glare or covering their head with blankets so that the room becomes a more appropriate sleep environment. It is necessary to have some lighting in rooms to ensure staff can see youth clearly when conducting room checks. And the youth's head must be visible as well during room checks. If dimming options are available for the lights that would be a first choice for the rooms. A second option would be light covers that create a sky seen similar to the drop ceiling covers used to reduce intensity of lighting in classrooms and other meeting spaces.
- d. **Walls** -Adding removable wall murals would allow each youth an atmosphere they desire in their room. In this way their rooms can be used optimally for sleep or relaxation as well as for writing and reading. The wall murals shown here also give the illusion of green space which does not exist on the unit.
- e. **Floors** -The rooms have concrete floors; area rugs provide a warmer area along with bedding selected by youth or provided by the family.
- f. **Furnishing** – Stools have been selected that are movable and can be placed in room under desk. This style stool provides some back support for youth who may be working at their desks.



Unit 3 Observations:

This is a very large unit that has a large common area that can easily become very noisy if several youth are using the space simultaneously. Options for noise reduction and use of space will be important to the overall function of the unit. Painting the doors and walls the same color once again reduces the focus on the room doors or “cells”. This alone makes the unit feel a little less correctional. The darker color selected for this larger space also provides a sense of warmth. The unit has several very nice chairs that are durable and not correctional in appearance that can be configured into smaller areas where youth can congregate. The area rug also helps with making the unit feel more like a college dorm than a correctional facility.



Unit 3 configuration:

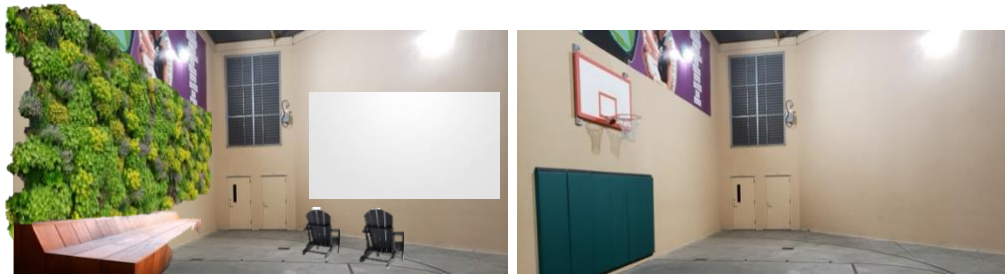
- A large meeting room/(classroom 1) currently considered a multi-use space for meetings or group – This room has a small storage area in the back which has been designed as a chill room. This is a good use of this space but it is isolated and thus it is recommended that a surveillance camera is installed and that youth request permission to use the space which should remain locked when not in use.
- A second large room/classroom currently serving as an indoor gym. It is going to be equipped with treadmill, elliptical and other gym equipment.
- Large outdoor courtyard recreation area/basketball court.
- A small multipurpose room off the basketball court that is very secluded. The idea is to use the space as a movie/incentive room where youth can play video games. And the conversion has already begun.
- Hair care corner
- Large Medical area with door
- Small non enclosed food prep area
- Interview room
- Guidance counseling room
- Safety room
- Several single youth rooms across two tiers.

Unit 3 Recommendations

This entire unit would function best as the primary program unit for the youth. When youth have completed all morning activities, they could transition to this space for a diverse group of daytime activities to include School, vocational programming, leisure recreation, groups, individual sessions, meals and free-time. This would allow the youth from the two units to come together

at times to use the space while also providing the option of bringing each unit individually to the space for periods of time during the day. The multiple areas on the unit allow for youth who are in school to attend school, youth who are in college would have space to participate virtually and groups can occur. In terms of supervision, it is a much more efficient use of staffing given that all youth are located in the space simultaneously.

1. **Convert the outdoor recreation space connected to unit into a multi-use garden/park area.** This adds green space and an outdoor environment within the confines of the facility. Research has shown that views of greenery, grass and trees are important for overall mental health and wellness. Both Units 9 and 11 have a traditional basketball hoop open space that could be maintained in its current fashion to allow two functional recreation areas in addition to the indoor gym and outdoor recreation area. The plan for this area would require an outdoor water source to water plants and greenery. This does not currently exist in this space. The space would also require outlets to facilitate flexible use and potentially lighting to support the plants. The recommendations below are designed to assist in the conversion of the space.
 - a. **Remove the basketball hoop and padding.**

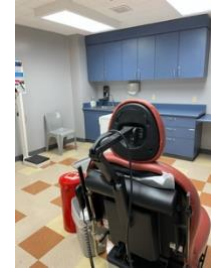


- b. **Install a wall garden with bench bottom** for seating along the back wall where the basketball hoop is currently located from floor to the level of the mural. This becomes the landscape viewable from the unit. And if appropriately constructed (waterproof) the bench could become a locked storage area for the leisure recreation items.
 - c. **Install raised garden beds** that help to section off the space. These would allow for planting of vegetables or flowers. Building these structures and maintaining them could become part of the carpentry program (if there is suitable space in the facility to have such a program), otherwise maybe the youth at Camp Sweeney could build these with design ideas provided by youth and family. Planting and care of the gardens could be incorporated into a horticulture program/club at the facility.
 - d. **Multi use design of the recreation area** – Add flexible outdoor seating. The wall planters with benches will form some seating on the back wall. Other seating could include foldable picnic tables with holes for umbrellas that could be used during visitation, outdoor dining, and lunch or break areas for staff and youth. Stackable Adirondack chairs could be used for group, or seating for outdoor movies projected on the wall. Painting wall white facilitates using it as a screen. Outlets would be necessary to use the projector in this area. The area is suitable

for yoga and mindfulness activities with appropriate equipment. Practicing these skills is part of the curriculum being offered by the contracted therapist and ACBH. This area is easily visible from the unit which allows program facilitators and volunteers to use the space without additional staffing supervision.

2. **Convert the medical area to Kitchen/Culinary Art/Meeting Space.**

The current medical area is a very large space that currently contains a dental chair. This space seems too large for medicals intended use given that the facility has a medical unit where exams usually take place. The area could be used for a culinary arts program, or a space for youth to prepare meals. The facility provides meals this space would allow for supplemental meals as well as storage for snacks. (Designing this would of course require input from culinary arts and building contractor). When not in use as a kitchen the space is also large enough to be flexibly used to meet with youth or hold small groups.



3. **Convert the medical area to a vocational/technical programming room** – This space can also be reconfigured and outfitted to house a vocational program such as the building trades. If more space is required the program could be expanded to consume the current food preparation area.

4. **Convert current adjacent food prep area.** If there is a need for medical to have an area on the unit the location of the current food prep area could have a wall added with a door to accommodate this. If neither is needed this may be a good space to use as an additional office area for the community-based programs that will be serving this population.



5. **Multi use tables** – There are currently very large round tables with attached chairs. These seats consume significant floor space and cannot be flexibly used for other purposes. It is suggested that smaller 4 person tables be purchased with chairs that can be moved. This design encourages youth to sit and eat together or use the tables for games or activities.

6. **Meeting Room/ Classroom 1** – This room is already designed for multipurpose use. It is a very large room and the ACPD has already proposed to add 4 tables that can be combined to make one large table (similar to the picture) or pulled apart to make several seating areas for school, training, or individual group work.



7. **Meeting room/classroom 2** – The right half of this

room is already planned as a gym for youth. The other side of the room could be set up as an additional leisure recreation space or group room. Or set with tables for youth to flexibly use for homework or visitation. This space could also house the small cubicles shown below in recommendation 10 and allow for private meeting/visitation/or virtual college spaces.

8. **Open Common Space** – While the open common space is large it suffers the same challenges one experiences with an open floor plan in a home. Sound carries throughout the main room and it is difficult to have several activities happening at once. The TV for this space is currently located above the opening in front of the shower area. The chairs in the common space can be configured to face the television for viewing. Per youth request they would like a curtain that can go across the shower area so that they are not looking at the shower while watching television. While this may be desired it creates a large blind spot behind the curtain. The location of the main TV is also problematic because the sound from that television fills the room which limits the use of the unit for other purposes, like holding group or completing phone calls. If the TV remains in its current location, it should be used for large group viewing as opposed to being on all day. Given that this unit is now being proposed as a multi-purpose unit it is expected that youth will be engaged in other activities throughout the day and thus the TV should not be on during the day. A more appropriate plan is to place the TV in a meeting space like the room where the gym equipment is located or use the TV in the back area off the proposed outdoor garden. Placing TV on walls just above eye level with seating allows youth to play video games or watch TV.
9. **Multipurpose room off unit outdoor recreation area** – The multipurpose room located just off of the outdoor recreation area has been equipped to allow youth to watch TV or play video games potentially. The concept is that the space would serve as an incentive room. This is a nice space for that in terms of set up but it is secluded well away from the rest of the unit so this would definitely require a staff person to be present. The large rockers work for seating but their size reduces the number of youth who can use the space at one time. This space may be under-utilized because a staff member would have to be with youth in this space because it is not visible from the main unit. A camera should be installed in this room as an additional, not substitute, safety feature. Cameras assist with PREA compliance.



10. Space for phone calls/ individual session / class and study space –

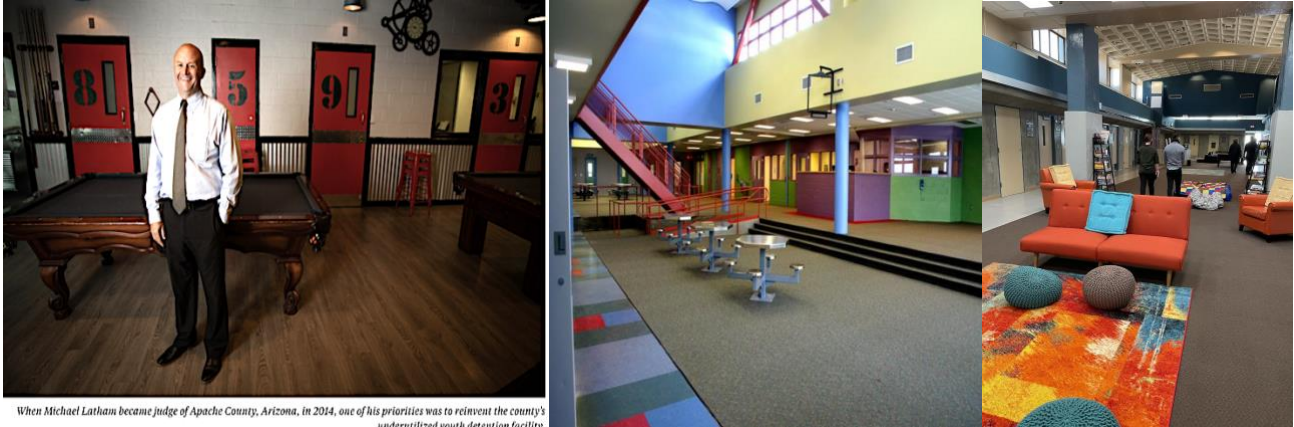
- a. **Meeting Modular** -As part of the preplanning ACPD considered the purchase “phone booths” (pictured below on the left) to place on the unit. This would facilitate calls with family but if slightly larger booths (pictured below middle and right) could be purchased, this would allow these rooms to be used more flexibly and equipped to serve as miniature classrooms for virtual learning and still serve as virtual or in person visitation rooms and as private meeting spaces for individual therapy sessions. <https://room.com/pages/focus-room>



- b. **Room conversions** – An alternative is to convert Unused “rooms” into small offices that could serve the same purpose as the modular. There is already a desk in the room and a chalkboard on the opposite wall. The same types of removable wall murals that were recommended for youth rooms on the living spaces could be used here to create a less sterile feel. The concrete floor could be covered with an appropriate carpet tile to make it feel more like a work/meeting space. The bed could be covered with a spread and pillows so that it resembles a couch. This maintains the integrity of the room in case the unit is again used primarily for housing. Although optimally the bed could be removed all together to allow for a larger work space. A contractor would need to explore the capability to extend electricity and internet in these rooms unless pre-charged laptops could be used in the space. The doors already have a relatively large window for viewing but a camera could also be installed in these rooms. The laptops could also be mirrored onto a computer at the officer’s desk for monitoring of activity as needed to ensure appropriate use of these devices. An office chair should be added as opposed to the small circular stool. Headphones should be provided to reduce noise from the unit.

11. General unit recommendations:

- a. **Flooring** – install carpet or carpet tiles on the large portion of the unit to provide a more educational space feeling and reduce the noise that comes with the concrete/ linoleum floors. This would be outlined by a rubber transition strip 3 feet out from the rooms to accommodate the potential for toilet flooding. The remainder of the linoleum or concrete flooring could be covered in a hospital grade viny wood look flooring that is more aesthetically pleasing and cleans up easily. The dining area/table game area could also be lined with wood look flooring. Examples of both below:



- b. **Remove remnants of correctional practice** – there is currently caution tape on the floor designed to communicate to youth that they should stay out of areas or not cross lines. This can easily be communicated in the community rules if needed. This would include the tape around the large officer desk area.

Programming/Vocation/Education Space – In the current proposal Unit 3 is recommended as the programming space for every activity during the day as well as for visitation with families. It was difficult to determine how much space would be needed for education because it was not clear how many youth would require a high school curriculum vs a college or vocational educational program. The JJC does have a school and if there were an ability to dedicate a classroom or two to provide education in addition to unit 3 that would be an excellent way to provide youth a more traditional classroom experience and an additional space to transition during the day. With the use of only unit 3 for all programming to include education, there may not be enough educational, programming space and especially if the program evolves to include a full array of vocational/technical programming. Camp Sweeney has a music studio as well as the Multi-Core Curriculum (MC3) designed to introduce youth to the construction trades. Both of these programs along with the Culinary Arts and Barbering Programs should be considered and would potentially require additional space above and beyond what can reasonably be placed on Unit 3. This should be a part of planning as ACPD considers the use of space in the Juvenile Hall for this group of young people.

Facility Areas that are used by all youth at the JJC – In addition to the units for housing and programming the youth on the unit have access to the common visitation area, the re-entry area, library, indoor gym and the outdoor recreation area.

1. **Visitation**- ACPD has already begun the process of making the JJC as comfortable and normative setting as possible. The visitation room seating looks a lot like a typical hospital clinic seating area. The quadrant seating design lends itself to some privacy during family visitation. ACPD has also begun the process of allowing families to participate in visits on the youth’s programming units. This is an excellent way to normalize the environment for youth and help families to have a vision of where the youth resides while away from home. The additional modifications on Unit 3 will also allow for multiple spaces where families can engage in activities during visitation and have a level of privacy.



2. **Transition Center** –The Transition Center is program designed to provide youth and families linkages to community-based programs such as vocational training, referrals to counseling and/or mentoring services and access to transportation and food vouchers. There are also activities for younger children to use while the families are receiving



services. Court contact and at times confinement can be stressful to families. This space allows families to decompress and gain resources needed to meet the youth’s needs in a setting that communicates caring and hope. While not large, the area is well designed.

3. **Library** - The library located within the hall is available to all youth and has a number of books that are of interest to youth. The library is provided and staffed by the Alameda



County Libraries and houses the Write to Read program. The librarian noted that she rotates books based upon youth interest or theme. Youth can request books and the librarian secures from the main library. The Write to Read program provides

literacy and tutoring services as a part of the library program. This small space is well designed and comfortable. The colors and art on the walls are inspiring.

- 4. **Outdoor Recreation Areas** - This area has a basketball court but little else. The facility was apparently built on a fault line and as a result some of the recreation areas are no longer level. The current basketball courts need to be leveled and resurfaced likely with



the help of an engineer to make recommendations for how best to sustain a level playing surface.

The ACPD has begun to consider how to improve the outdoor space for youth. The initial request created a structure for rope climbing and something akin to a jungle gym. Given



the age of youth who will be participating in the program, it is unlikely that this structure will be used frequently by the 823 program or the other youth at the facility and it consumes a large portion of the current grassy area. It is suggested that the workout

stations be maintained without the jungle gym. The large grassy areas could be leveled and covered with turf to create a soccer field/ flag football area which may be used more frequently for both large muscle as well as gym classes. A walking track around the outside is useful for youth who are interested in running or walking as opposed to group recreation. A few benches should be installed for staff and youth to sit during leisure recreation. There are a few raised bed gardens. It is recommended that the gardens be placed on Unit 3 in the outdoor recreation area per the recommendations noted previously. The current location limits youth access to care for the plants and requires additional staffing for a subset of the youth to be escorted to the area to maintain them. The recommended space for the raised beds also ensures the plants can be protected from balls landing on them from the courts or youth tampering with them.

Potential use of Camp Sweeney for the SB823 program– Camp Sweeney is a staff secure facility without an exterior fence. It currently houses youth age 15 to 19. This program is a lower security option for youth who may have committed their first offense even if they have significant charges. The facility is more than 60 years old and is noted to be in disrepair primarily due to its age. Despite its structural challenges the program has great leadership and the staffing is relatively stable with many staff members who have been there for over a decade. The staff buy in and investment in the program is evident and is a testament to the Camp Sweeney leadership. Unlike the Hall, youth at Camp Sweeney are able to leave the facility for community programs. This is an excellent way to ensure youth continue their connection with the community.

As a part of the SB823 program planning process Camp Sweeney was mentioned as a potential space to be used for the program, especially given the established programming and underutilized dorms. This presents many challenges for Camp Sweeney. The first is that many of the youth who will be placed at the SB823 program have already struggled in programs that are less secure. Their placement with youth who may have been committed on their first offense or potentially a lesser offense begins the process of mixing higher risk youth with lower risk youth. This has been found to be detrimental to the progress of lower risk youth and may end up creating a “compromised” program that cannot effectively meet the needs of either population. In addition, many of the youth that would transition from the SB823 program would be significantly older than the current Camp Sweeney population with very different needs. This would place a great burden on the Camp Sweeney staff and administration to attempt to meet the needs of such a diverse population of youth all on one campus. Camp Sweeney has also been considered to serve as a step-down program. This also is not an optimal consideration for the SB823 program. The youth who are transitioning to community should be placed in the community. It is recommended that as the SB823 program continues to develop, appropriate community-based options should be explored to assist youth in making this transition. These youth will require assistance in practicing independent living skills, continuing vocational/career technical programming, gaining employment and transitioning to adulthood. For some youth families may be a part of this process but for others they may require support of a structured supportive community program designed specifically to continue progress made while at the JJC.