

**ORANGE COUNTY JUVENILE JUSTICE COMMISSION
LAMOREAUX JUVENILE JUSTICE CENTER
COMMISSION CONFERENCE ROOM – 2nd FLOOR
341 The City Drive, Orange, CA 92868
Wednesday October 7, 2026
9:00 a.m.**

AGENDA

- 1) CALL TO ORDER**
- 2) APPROVAL OF MINUTES**
- 3) REPORTS FROM STANDING COMMITTEES/WORKING GROUPS**
- 4) REPORTS FROM INSPECTIONS/REVIEWS**
- 5) REPORTS FROM LIAISON ACTIVITIES & WEBINARS**
- 6) MISCELLANEOUS BUSINESS/ANNOUNCEMENTS**
- 7) COMMISSIONER COMMENTS**
- 8) ADJOURNMENT**

**MINUTES OF ORANGE COUNTY
JUVENILE JUSTICE COMMISSION
Wednesday October 7, 2026**

The regular meeting of the Orange County Juvenile Justice Commission was called to order at 9:00 a.m. by Vice Chair Churchill. The meeting was held at the Betty Lou Lamoreaux Juvenile Justice Center, 341 The City Drive, Orange, California, in the second floor Commission Conference Room.

COMMISSIONERS

PRESENT:

Denise Churchill; Vice Chair
Judy Johnson
Anne Light
Lynda Perring (Teams)
Madelyn Rodriguez
Briel Sayago
Dorothy Stafford
Catherine Twardos
Mary Lou Vachet

COMMISSIONERS

ABSENT:

Amy Crowley
Silvestre Lopez
Connie Marshall
Ryan Rising
Dolores Yost
Steve Winder, Chair

STAFF: Lii Toelupe, Executive Administrative Assistant
Emily Sanchez, Legal Processing Specialist

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

The September 16, 2026, minutes were approved by unanimous consent.

CORRESPONDENCE

Correspondence was reviewed.

REPORTS FROM STANDING COMMITTEES & WORKING GROUPS

A. Education

Commissioner Johnson reported that she attended a meeting with the Orange County Department of Education (OCDE) alongside Commissioners Marshall and Vachet. She reported that there has been a significant decrease in the number of students enrolled in high school programs, with approximately 102 students currently at Fischer, Rio, and Lyons. As a result, participation in the essay and art contest has also decreased. There are currently only four students at YRC, although the program remains fully staffed. OCDE's Access program has staffing capacity for approximately 8,000 students but currently serves about 5,000, compared to more than 10,000 students in previous years. Fischer, Rio, and Lyons are identified as Area 4 and 8 schools for youth in custody. OCDE works with numerous providers and volunteers who undergo detailed background checks and must meet school district requirements, and the department is working to ensure compliance with these requirements. Youth are now permitted to access the library once a week, and OCDE is reimplementing school mascots, with Juvenile Hall using the Bear and Rio using the Eagle. Participation in the essay contest will be reflected on students' school transcripts. OCDE also offers educational pathways that generally take two years

to complete; because many youth do not remain in the programs for two years, 'microbadges' and certificates are also available, and OCDE maintains a list of students who have earned these credentials. Commissioner Johnson also noted that OCDE continues to have a positive and collaborative relationship with Probation.

B. Non-Institutional Placements

No updates to report.

C. Law Enforcement Agency

Commissioners Vachet reported all agency reviews have been completed.

D. Legislation

Commissioner Johnson reported that the legislative session ended on September 30, 2026, and noted that there was a significant number of new laws passed toward the end of the session. She highlighted several laws relevant to youth and families. The HUG Act, based on the Youth Bill of Rights, supports youth being able to have physical contact, such as hugs and holding hands, with family and extended family members during visits, subject to security screening and Probation's determination of whether the contact presents a safety concern. SB 1345, related to the Foster Youth Bill of Rights, which provides foster youth with the right to have their personal belongings transferred with them when they move to another placement, including appropriate storage such as a duffle bag rather than trash bags or boxes, and to have access to their belongings when they are in placement. AB 1905 addresses custodial interrogations of juveniles age 17 and under, limiting the use of misrepresentation during questioning and restricting the use of undercover officers to obtain information, except in situations involving an imminent threat to life. AB 1267 ends child marriage in California by establishing that individuals must be at least 18 years old to marry. AB 1201 addresses reunification services and expands opportunities for families to care for children, including changes related to parents or family members with certain crime convictions and economic circumstances. AB 2555 addresses English learners and changes the requirements related to the number of requirements they must satisfy. Commissioner Johnson also noted that several new laws were enacted addressing social media and children.

E. Essay and Art Contest

Commissioner Vachet provided an update on the upcoming Essay and Art Contest. She reported that five art submissions were received, with this being the first year the contest has accepted artwork in color. The theme for this year is "The Next Chapter," and the artwork was passed around for the Commissioners to review. This is also the first year that the Commission will have an art exhibition in partnership with Santiago Canyon College (SCC). Commissioners will vote on the top three art submissions, with the remaining two receiving honorable mentions. Commissioner Vachet also reported that the essay packets given to Commissioners included nine post-secondary submissions and approximately 50 K-12 submissions, compared with approximately 90 K-12 submissions last year. She noted that the lower number of submissions is consistent with the decrease in the youth population. The post-secondary students have been particularly busy with an in-person chemistry class, which has contributed to the lower number of submissions. K-12 students do not have access to Artificial Intelligence (AI) and all essays will be reviewed

through a program to ensure that AI was not used. Commissioners were asked to rank the K–12 and post-secondary essays separately, selecting first, second, and third place in each category, as well as selecting six honorable mentions from both categories combined.

F. Annual Report

Commissioner Johnson asked the Commissioners to select meaningful or notable quotes from the essay submissions that they would like to see included in the Commission's next annual report.

G. JJC/ Probation Book Club

Tabled to the next JJC meeting on October 21, 2026.

H. Substance Use Treatment Programs/Services

No updates to report.

I. High Needs Youth

Commissioner Churchill reported that the Commission has reached out to the Social Services Agency (SSA) to arrange a meeting.

J. Educational/Vocational Programs and Services for Post-Graduate System-Involved Youth

Commissioner Johnson reported that the Commission is awaiting responses to questions that were previously submitted.

K. Reentry of Probation Youth

No updates to report.

REPORTS FROM INSPECTIONS/REVIEWS

A. CASA Youth Shelter Tour

Commissioners Johnson, Sayago, and Winder attended the CASA Youth Shelter tour on September 18, 2026. Commissioners Johnson and Sayago reported that this emergency temporary shelter is in Los Alamitos and has six bedrooms that serves youth ages 12–17. The facility is co-ed, with eight beds designated for community placements and four reserved for dual-status youth. The shelter provides up to 30 days of placement for youth who are away from care or at risk of becoming away from care, with the goal of providing stabilization and support. Youth attending the shelter do not attend school during their placement and receive extensive therapeutic services. The program is supported largely through community funding and does not charge for any of its services, including family counseling. At the time of the tour, five youth were staying at the facility. The shelter has a large family room with games and musical instruments, and a volunteer provides music instruction. The facility also has an exercise area and basketball court. Commissioners noted that the facility was well maintained and had comfortable, welcoming rooms, and that the staff appeared very positive and supportive. The shelter operates as a no-touch facility (meaning they do not use physical intervention) and has specific criteria regarding the youth it can accept. The organization is also planning to build transitional housing next to the current facility.

B. Institution Medical Inspection

Commissioners Johnson, Light, Rodriguez, and Winder attended the Institution Medical Inspection via MS Teams on September 22, 2026. Commissioner Johnson reported that the meeting was attended by Grace Lizardo and Joie Roi and that overall, everything was going well. The group went through the standard inspection questions, and there were no significant new concerns reported. Regarding staffing, medical services had experienced challenges in the past but are no longer using registry nurses and are now utilizing contracted nurses. The emergency medical bags located throughout the facilities contain Stop the Bleed kits. No Narcan has been administered at any of the facilities during the past year, compared to six instances the previous year. Two doses of Narcan are included in each discharge packet for both dependents and wards. Discharge packets also include condoms and test strips, with availability for youth under age 12 determined on a case-by-case basis. Commissioner Johnson noted that parents have contacted the facilities to express their appreciation for the Narcan after it was used to save a life for someone in their home. Recent COVID-19 cases were also discussed. The medical unit received an excellence award for administering a high number of flu vaccinations. No measles cases were reported, although youth continue to be screened for measles. The Commission again asked about sexually transmitted diseases (STDs), and medical staff provided a chart showing the number of youth tested and the types of tests administered at Juvenile Hall and Orangewood. There were 77 positive tests reported last year, including six at Orangewood, highlighting that STDs continue to be an issue among the youth served. Tal Phan was also identified as the new dietitian at Juvenile Hall.

C. Fischer & Rio Institution Education Inspection

Commissioners Johnson, Vachet, and Winder attended the inspection at Fischer and Rio Institution on September 24, 2026. Commissioner Johnson reported that they met with school principal Dr. Aja Cordova at Fischer and had a productive meeting. The Commissioners were provided with a handout containing current student enrollment information, which was shared with the group. As of September 21, 2026, there were 60 students at Fischer and 13 students at Rio. There were 24 students identified as students with disabilities and English learners. The number of students may decrease next year. Fischer currently has five graduating students, and there are 10 dual-status foster youth. The next graduation is scheduled for June 30, 2027. The Commissioners received an overview of the Unit Y classroom program and how students transition to an Access site when they leave the school. Staff at the Access site meet with students to help make the transition more comfortable. The school is fully staffed and has substitute teachers available. Staff also discussed the procedures for addressing behavioral issues that may arise in the classroom. A reading specialist is available to assess students and provide additional support. Commissioner Johnson reported that the school has a good working relationship with Probation. It was also reported that the YGC school at Rio is scheduled to move to a new facility next July.

D. STRTP Review of Mary's Path

Commissioners Sayago, Vachet, Winder, and Yost attended the STRTP review of Mary's Path on September 28, 2026. During the tour, Commissioners learned that there were seven girls residing at the program, ranging in age from 14 to 19, including one mother with a toddler and another mother with an infant. Commissioner Sayago spoke with one of the young mothers, who shared that she had been at the program for approximately

two and a half years, was enrolling in college, and appeared confident and positive about her future. Commissioners discussed therapeutic services, including individual and family therapy, and noted the strong sense of connection among the residents. The program hosts “house nights” where residents share meals together to build community. Residents receive a monthly hygiene allowance of \$65 and an additional allowance of \$130 every other month. Staff emphasized the importance of ensuring that youth have the resources they need to maintain their appearance and well-being. The facility also maintains a garden, which residents continue to care for, although outdoor activities have become less frequent. Commissioner Vachet reported that the facility was serving two youth who had experienced severe commercial sexual exploitation. She noted that they met with Kristy Anderson (replaced Clete Mennke), who was open, engaged, and enthusiastic about her role. Staff make efforts to ensure that youth have access to culturally appropriate hair and personal care products to meet the needs of different ethnicities. Commissioner Vachet also reported that the facility believes it is well equipped to support youth who have experienced commercial sexual exploitation and feels confident in its ability to provide specialized care for this population.

REPORTS FROM LIAISON ACTIVITIES & WEBINARS

A) Tour of YTC

Commissioner Johnson reported that the visit was great. The group was provided with hard hats, gloves, and safety glasses and was taken around the site for a tour. She said the experience was very impressive. The group viewed Stage 1 of construction for the residential area.

B) Project Kinship Conference

Commissioner Vachet reported that the event was motivational. She noted that Project Kinship has the most contracts in the county. There was a speaker who was phenomenal, and the event was well attended. The program was held for eight hours throughout the day.

C) Commercially Sexually Exploited Children (CSEC) Steering Committee

Commissioner Vachet reported that she is looking forward to seeing what the subgroups are working on. The agencies went around the table and provided updates on their current activities.

D) CWSIP Meeting

Commissioner Churchill reported that SSA discussed the statewide database, which was originally scheduled to take place on October 26, 2026, but has been moved by the State to December 7, 2026. SSA also discussed that the Board of Supervisors approved \$110 million to support the new High Fidelity wraparound services and that SSA is changing its processes to better support this effort. They have also been working on surveys for birth parents, supporting youth, and placement stability.

E) Understanding Gang Trafficking Pathway Training

Commissioner Johnson reported that she was able to view the slides from the presentation, which were geared more toward the court. Martha was a speaker and shared her personal story, discussing the eight stages of gang involvement. She emphasized that

children involved in gangs are often victims of child abuse and that being pushed into a gang should be viewed as child abuse. Martha now considers herself a victim and encouraged the use of the term “gang-involved” rather than “gang member.” She explained that wearing gang-type clothing can often serve as a form of armor for youth living in certain neighborhoods. She also discussed how organized gangs can continue to operate even when leaders are incarcerated, with leaders directing individuals on the outside to carry out activities.

F) OYCR Conference

Tabled to the next JJC meeting on October 21, 2026.

UPCOMING MEETINGS/WEBINARS/INSPECTIONS

Commissioner Yost is planning to attend the CSEC Prevention and Awareness Subcommittee meeting on October 8, 2026.

Commissioner Churchill, Crowley and Winder are planning to attend the CJJCC meeting on October 12, 2026.

Commissioner Yost is planning to attend the QPI Quarterly meeting on October 15, 2026.

Commissioners Churchill, Crowley, Perring and Winder are planning to attend the OC STRTP Forum on October 20, 2026.

Commissioners Churchill, Johnson, and Winder are planning to attend the JJC executive committee meeting on October 21, 2026.

COMMISSIONER COMMENTS

No commissioner comments.

CLOSED SESSION

The executive session was convened from 11:30 am. – 11:46 a.m.

ADJOURNMENT

The meeting was adjourned at 11:46 a.m.

Denise Churchill

Denise Churchill, Vice Chair