

Riverside County Office of Education Correctional Education

Background

Twin Pines Ranch and Van Horn Youth Center are operated by the County Probation Department. The schools are administered by the Alternative Education Department of the Riverside County Office of Education. This report deals solely with two schools. Twin Pines High School at Twin Pines Ranch is situated on 1,100 acres at an altitude of 5,000 feet in the San Jacinto Mountains. Van Horn Youth Center School is located next to the Riverside Juvenile Court on County Farm Road.

Twin Pines High School is supervised by a coordinator/principal under the Alternative Education Program Division of the Riverside County Office of Education. The instructional staff consists of three academic teachers and one vocational instructor who use four classrooms, averaging twelve students (cadets) each.

Van Horn School is in the Van Horn Youth Center, a forty-four-bed facility. The school provides education and redirection for cadets who are first-time offenders and wards of the courts.

Findings

Twin Pines High School

1. In 1953, Twin Pines High School became Riverside County Office of Education's first juvenile court school serving fifteen to eighteen year old male juvenile offenders. All cadets are wards of the court, and are administered physical examinations before their arrival at the school. Educational testing is conducted at the school.
2. The school provides accredited educational programs to remedy academic deficiencies and help overcome dysfunctional life styles. At Twin Pines Ranch, much of the 1,100 acres are barren and not in use.
3. State funding is based on an averaged daily attendance. Additional funding is provided by the Federal Elementary and Secondary Education Act. This funding provides a supplemental remedial academic activity for low-achieving students sentenced to residential institutions.
4. Limited housing capacity at Twin Pines Ranch contributes to the delays of juveniles waiting placement into Twin Pines High School, and reception of the intensive education available at this facility.

5. In 1994, Twin Pines High School began using an organized military structure with military-style uniforms and calling students "cadets." An improvement in attitude and discipline has been noted since the implementation of this style of training began.

Van Horn School

1. The Riverside County Probation and Mental Health Departments operate the Van Horn Youth Center School on County Farm Road in Riverside. Administration is by the Alternative Education Department of Riverside County Office of Education.

2. Cadets range in age from twelve to eighteen years and are sentenced from six months to one year at the facility, currently operating at near capacity. Since 1980, the school has served more than 1,000 students (56 percent male and 44 percent female) who have committed criminal acts.

3. Van Horn School is coeducational. Instruction is provided through the Riverside County Office of Education. General Education Development (GED) certificates and high school graduation are two of the educational services available to cadets.

Recommendations

The Riverside County Office of Education:

1. Study the feasibility of enlarging the school facilities/programs at Twin Pines and Van Horn schools.

2. Continue close coordination with the Probation Department in use of military structure at county juvenile probation schools.