

Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention Commission

San Mateo County, California

Group Home Inspection

Please respond to sections that apply to the facility you are inspecting.
Type or print clearly.

Facility Name: Canyon Oaks Date of this Inspection: 7/28/16

Address: 400 Edmonds Rd, Redwood City, CA 94062 Date of Last Inspection: 8/25/14

Contact Person: Victoria Valencia, Supervising Mental Health Clinician

Facility Capacity: 12 Current Population: 9

Phone Number: (650) 312-5320 Annual Population: 12-16

Presiding Juvenile Court Judge: Judge Clifford Cretan

Commission Inspection Team: Rick Boitano, Al Serrato, Michele Gustafson

Major Concerns, Observations, and Recommendations

Observations: Canyon Oaks is an exceptional facility with a dedicated staff. The youth are provided excellent care and treatment. The educators, therapists and staff assigned to Canyon Oaks are compassionate and do a great job with the population. The doors to the outside are not locked from the inside, so the residents may leave. The doors are alarmed so that staff is alerted if a resident opens the door, allowing the staff to supervise the resident if they leave the grounds.

Concerns: With the drought, the small lawn at Canyon Oaks is no longer watered, so is brown and uneven. The grounds should be improved by the installation of artificial turf or some other surface where the lawn used to be. This would make it more feasible to use the grounds for recreation. Additionally, the blacktop is old and cracking in places. It has not been replaced since Canyon Oaks was built and should be assessed for repair or replacement. Further, Canyon Oaks should receive a storage shed for supplies that are currently stored in the Art Therapist's office. Currently supplies are on open shelves above the desks in that office, creating a hazard that everything will fall from near ceiling height should there be an earthquake. It would also be very helpful to replace the doorbell so that ringing can be heard throughout the facility. Currently, it is only audible in certain parts of the facility, which means that visitors are often unable to get anyone to come to the door to let them in.

Recommendations: We have two recommendations to slightly improve access to grievance process: (1) grievance forms are currently kept in the locked office and a youth must ask for one (this doesn't appear to have deterred anyone from asking), but we recommend finding a central place where the forms could be kept and returned into a locked box; (2) prominently post the Community Care Licensing number (and why you'd call it) where residents and families could see it. The number is available on the license (which is posted), but is not prominent on the page.

Fire Inspection Report: Yes No Date: 6/16/16

Health Department Report: Yes No Date: Because Canyon Oaks falls under Community Care Licensing, they have a different type of inspection by MediCal.

Areas Reviewed

Quality of Life:

- Physical Plants
- Meals/Nutrition
- Mental Health
- Physical/Dental Health
- Religious Services
- Volunteer Involvement
- Visiting
- Other: _____

Programs:

- Education
- Vocational/Employability
- Community Service
- Individual/Group Counseling
- Substance Abuse
- Other: _____

Persons Interviewed:

- Minors
- Director
- Youth Supervisor/Staff
- Food Services Staff – n/a
- Other: Relief Staff

General Information

Stated purpose of facility: Canyon Oaks was created 13 years ago as an in-county level 14 group home for youth with severe mental health issues. Before Canyon Oaks, youth would be sent to a locked facility, as far away as Los Angeles or Florida.

Canyon Oaks is a 'no eject, no reject' program. Even if a youth is violent, they might be temporarily sent to juvenile hall or a psychiatric unit but Canyon Oaks will keep a bed open for them so they can return. This policy is conducive to getting resolution to issues and treatment for the youth rather than passing everything down the line.

Any youth going to Canyon Oaks must have their case reviewed by IPRC (Interagency Placement Review Committee) as well as certification by Mental Health that they have a high level of mental health needs. Their population includes youth with 300 dependency status, 602 designation (delinquency) or an IEP requirement.

Type of operating license: Community Care Licensing

License number: 415600309

Most recent licensing inspection (including entity performing inspection): Not clear because Canyon Oaks is subject to Community Care Licensing standards. Their license is up to date.

Rating level: 14

Target population of juveniles: Dependent minors and wards of the court. No minor can be a resident at Canyon Oaks unless they have an IEP and have been reviewed by the IPRC (Inter Placement Review Committee)

Age range of juveniles: 13-19

Juveniles' home counties: Only San Mateo County

Pre-Plan for Emergencies: Yes No Date of Last Drill: 8/12/16

Comments: Canyon Oaks conducts multiple drills for emergencies. We reviewed the plans kept in the office.

Staffing

Describe staff specialties: There is a psychiatrist on premises 10 hours a week and on-call other times; mental health nurse intern on rotation; two FT therapists; one PT AOD (Alcohol and Other Drugs) therapist; one FT occupational therapist; one FT art therapist; one FT cook; one FT medical office specialist; one program specialist; 17 FT counselors; 15 on-call (relief) counselors

Describe staff including numbers, background, ethnicity, language: There is almost always someone on staff who speaks Spanish. No other languages are spoken by staff. There is racial diversity of staff.

Ethnicities: 85-90% people of color (African-American, Mexican-American, El Salvadoran, Asian, Pacific Islander, Tongan)

Languages: Spanish (there is always a Spanish/English bilingual therapist); other languages are available through translator services.

Educational requirements for Staff: All staff must have a BA or AA with substantial experience in the field. All staff have a minimum of a BA. Of the clinical staff, half have Masters Degrees and are licensed therapists.

Training provided for staff: Initial training of 40 hours of crisis communication and safety, shadowing, medications, etc. After that, 20 hours/yr continuing ed. Also NMT training and First Aid training. The County provides training through LMS (Learning Management System). Additionally, Lisa Cohn Bennett, a practitioner with decades of experience, will provide a series of workshops to staff (each 3 hours). Training log is kept for all staff.

Staff to minor ratio: Awake at least 1:1 (staff may outnumber youth); Sleeping 1:4 (3 onsite staff)

Comments: Canyon Oaks has a high staff to youth ratio because of the high-needs nature of the residents

How is staff backup handled during grave-yard shift?: 3 staff are awake all night. They have an on-call list if needed.

Describe staff turnover, including frequency and reason: Not much turnover. Staff who have left will often go to master's program, out of state or elsewhere in county employment (i.e., promotion)

Describe general staff and minor interactions: Staff are firm but warm and predictable. The interactions between staff and minors were playful but controlled. Staff take youth on outings and 3 staff had just come back from taking 5 girls camping. All enjoyed the outing.

Comments: During interviews, both staff and youth expressed respect for one another. The staff are extremely caring and appreciate being able to form relationships with the youth. The youth, of course, sometimes find some of the staff "annoying" and occasionally chafe at the supervision but recognize the necessity and the positive intent in the staff's behaviors.

Conditions of Grounds and Building Exterior

Give a general description of the property: A 6000 square foot building nestled at the bottom of a hill next to the fire department. It is quiet and pastoral.

Give a general description of the main facility including housekeeping and sanitation: The main facility is neat and clean. It consists of several classrooms, offices, a kitchen, bedrooms, bathrooms and common rooms. The staff and youth have painted murals on the outside walls in the recreation area and created beautiful mosaic. Everything is very pleasant and homelike.

Lawns: Acceptable Unacceptable: The lawn is no longer watered due to the drought, leaving a patch of dead grass that is lumpy and hard to use for anything. Recommend replacing with artificial turf or something that the residents can use.

Playing Fields: Acceptable Unacceptable: See comment above re: lawns

Blacktop: Acceptable Unacceptable: Blacktop has not been replaced since opening 13 years ago. Beginning to crack and become uneven. Could use maintenance or replacement.

Paint: Acceptable Unacceptable

Roof: Acceptable Unacceptable: Did not check, but no problems reported

Drains and Gutters: Acceptable Unacceptable: Did not check, but no problems reported

General Appearance: Acceptable Unacceptable: The facility is attractive and pleasant.

Condition of Interior of Building

Walls: Acceptable Unacceptable: _____

Paint: Acceptable Unacceptable: _____

Floors: Acceptable Unacceptable: Carpets are in the process of being replaced.

Ceilings: Acceptable Unacceptable: _____

Drains: Acceptable Unacceptable: _____

Plumbing Fixtures: Acceptable Unacceptable: _____

Air Vents/Heating/Windows: Acceptable Unacceptable: _____

Smoke Alarms: Acceptable Unacceptable: _____

Storage of Cleaning Fluids/Chemicals: Acceptable Unacceptable: Storage of fluids is fine, however other art and sports supplies are currently stored in plastic bins on open shelves above the desks in the art therapist's office. This could be a big hazard in the case of an earthquake.

Recreation/Sports Equipment: Acceptable Unacceptable: _____

Hallways Clear/Doors Propped Open: Acceptable Unacceptable: _____

Sleeping Rooms: Acceptable Unacceptable: _____

Beds: Acceptable Unacceptable: _____

Art, Books, Personal Items Allowed in Rooms: Acceptable Unacceptable: Allowed

Graffiti Present: Acceptable Unacceptable: No graffiti.

Ample Blankets: Acceptable Unacceptable: _____

Study Area: Acceptable Unacceptable: _____

Adequate Lighting: Acceptable Unacceptable: _____

Temperature: Acceptable Unacceptable: _____

Orientation of Minors

What is in intake process for the facility?: Supervising Clinician receives a call about the youth from IPRC. Delinquent youth are interviewed at YSC and brought to Canyon Oaks by

probation office and/or parent. Dependency youth may come through HSA or a parent. Staff tries to do paperwork in a prior session before the first day (since being checked in can be hard on family and youth). Youth are given a tour, their rights and the rules and policies are explained, and parents and youth are given a robust handbook. The youth are given an ORAP package, which is a series of sheets they fill out that helps them get to know the other residents and the staff.

Are minors oriented to the house rules and procedures?: Yes No Explain: As above

Are house rules and grievance procedures posted?: Yes No Explain: Yes, rules and chores are posted

What is in place to ensure that these rules and procedures are understood by minors?: The ORAP package includes questions about rules and procedures. They can discuss with staff, as well.

Are clothing and possessions inventoried on arrival and departure?: Yes No

How are juvenile's clothing and possessions protected or stored?: Yes they are inventoried and any valuables are kept on the young person's shelf in a locked closet accessible only by staff. Individual toiletries are also protected.

Interviewed Minors: Yes No Details: We interviewed two residents at Canyon Oaks. At the time of inspection, there were 9 youth in residence. The youth both felt like the orientation to Canyon Oaks, the ORAP package described above, was well done and helped them to get to know the staff and other residents. When they first come to Canyon Oaks, each youth is assigned 2 primary staff who work with them and a therapist. They are free to talk to other staff, of course, but these staff members are the resident's main resources.

The youth like the staff. They do not always agree with individual staff members' decisions to take away privileges or to call them out on certain behavior, and sometimes don't like their attitudes in the moment (one said it sometimes depends on the relationship with the staff). They feel like the staff have their best interests at heart. They feel like they can tell staff their troubles.

The youth reported liking the freedom and the choices available at Canyon Oaks. One said it was the best Level 14 they'd ever been in (both youth interviewed had been in multiple different facilities). They appreciated that they were free to leave, even if a staff would follow. The main complaint was that they wished they could have less supervision (time to themselves on off-site field trips; unsupervised access to computers so they could play games, listen to music, watch movies) and more access to personal cell phones (again, mostly for entertainment purposes), but recognized that this would be difficult to implement uniformly or fairly.

The youth all understood and appreciated that there was no "one-size-fits-all" model for all the youth. They liked that the Day Treatment Program is based on an individualized treatment plan and teaches them real skills (one youth mentioned that "it is real help, not just worksheets and talking"). The youth felt like they were learning a lot both in school and in treatment. They felt supported and prepared for the next step.

Meals/Nutrition

Kitchen: Acceptable Unacceptable: _____

Do the youth share in preparation of meals?: Yes No Details: Occasionally youth will participate in cooking meals. The main meals are prepared by the chef, who is County staff, Monday through Friday. There is an entry-level job in the kitchen and there is also a cooking group for interested youth.

Are meals served family style?: Yes No Details: Each youth receives his or her own tray which is dished out by the chef. Youth are asked which dishes they would like.

Are minors permitted to converse during meals?: Yes No Details: _____

Are staff present and supervising during meals?: Yes No Details: _____

Are weekly menus posted?: Yes No Details: _____

Are servings ample, nutritious, appetizing?: Yes No Details: The meal was delicious and included a fresh salad, excellent steamed broccoli and watermelon for dessert.

Weaker minors protected from having food taken from them?: Yes No Details: Not a problem

Are snacks and beverages available?: Yes No Details: Water bottles, snacks (fruit) are provided between meals.

How do you meet special nutritional needs?: The chef handles special needs on an ad hoc basis.

Length of time allowed to eat?: 30 minutes, ample time for seconds

Mealtimes (no more than 4 hours between meals, breakfast to dinner, without a snack)

Breakfast: 8 or 8:15 **Lunch:** between 12:10 and 12:40 **Dinner:** about 5:30

Comments: A snack is provided around 8pm. Youth can keep personal snacks in their locked property.

Personal Appearance of Minors

Appearance: Acceptable Unacceptable: _____

Showers (frequency, privacy, supervised): Acceptable Unacceptable: Youth must be let into the showers with a key (they lock from the outside). Showers are private, but staff supervise by listening outside the door, particularly if the youth may have a history of self-harm or harmful behavior

Condition of clothing (clean, fit, etc.): Acceptable Unacceptable: _____

Clothing appropriate to current weather: Acceptable Unacceptable: _____

Comments: Youth bring their own clothes and toiletries from home, so residents of Canyon Oaks do not have a uniform. If a resident is missing something, the staff will work with them to purchase it. The residents were tidy and well-dressed.

Programs

Recreation (type, amount, etc.): Acceptable Unacceptable: The Canyon Oaks Day Treatment Program includes movement and walks. The program incorporates movement to facilitate concentration as well as for exercise.

Exercise (daily schedule, amount, etc.): Acceptable Unacceptable: Youth are never mandated to participate in exercise, but options are always available for exercise.

Access to Religious Services: Acceptable Unacceptable: Religious services are not programmed, but staff will take youth to services if they ask.

Access to Medical Services: Acceptable Unacceptable: Each youth receives a medical appointment within 30 days of entry. They can go to a doctor at San Mateo Medical Center if needed. That physician is on call 24/7. There is also a psychiatrist available. If there is an emergency, staff will call 911.

Access to Mental Health Services: Acceptable Unacceptable: If a youth requires access to mental health services outside of the Day Treatment Program or individual therapy, any staff can handle the request. If the need for mental health services is immediate, the staff will transport the youth to be assessed as 5150 or for self-admission, if the youth desires.

Individual Counseling: Acceptable Unacceptable: Every week each youth has an individual and family session, both with the same therapist. Further individual counselling can be ordered or requested.

Group Counseling: Acceptable Unacceptable: Day treatment program includes group therapy.

Substance Abuse Counseling: Acceptable Unacceptable: There is an AOD counselor who works at Canyon Oaks 20 hours/week. Healthright 360 will also be providing offsite support. There are also youth who attend AA meetings in the community (staff transport)

Victim Awareness Classes: Acceptable Unacceptable: There are no victim awareness classes, but this is not the focus of this program, so this is acceptable.

Gang Awareness Classes: Yes No Details: Same as above (none, but not program focus)

Sexual Harassment Classes: Yes No Details: Same as above (none, but not program focus)

Parenting Classes: Yes No Details: Not onsite, but these are available to parents

Vocational Classes: Yes No Details: There is an occupational and vocational therapist. This is done as both an individual and as a group. WorkAbility also provides a work coach who will be back in September.

Work Program: Yes No Details: Youth may have a job and staff will transport the youth to and from it.

Other: Canyon Oaks has numerous other programs like Yoga, LGBTQ programming. The staff take youth on numerous field trips (for example to Wildlife Associates, which the youth we interviewed loved calling it "a beautiful experience that was calming and quiet"). Ms. Valencia has also worked with the Bria Project to come up with a certification for dogs to come on site at Canyon Oaks, which the residents love. In the past, they have also worked with the SPCA to have dogs come for some interaction with residents, which has been popular with the youth.

Discipline of Minors

Describe the discipline process of minors: Discipline is a careful process at Canyon Oaks. They don't use consequence-based discipline. Staff uses verbal prompts and may ask the youth to spend some quiet time to reflect. A youth may be grounded if they are non-compliant. Youth are not forced to do any programming or even school in order to give the youth space.

There is a board on the common hallway that helps the staff to understand the level of safety for and comfort of each youth so that they can appropriately decide the youth's readiness to participate in programming or outings. This board includes the youth's goal for the day or week so that all can help that youth achieve success.

Grievances

Grievance Process: Acceptable Unacceptable: Youth ask for forms and submit written grievance to counselor. Youth may ask for a form from any staff member, day or night. The form is submitted to the mental health program specialist who will review it with the youth. It may then be reviewed with the appropriate staff person and the youth together. If not resolved at this point, it is taken to the supervising mental health clinician. All grievances have been resolved by the time they reach this level. If they are not resolved, the youth can call community care licensing.

Number of grievances this year: Grievance forms are placed in the youth's folder after submitted and resolved, not in a central location, so it is not clear how many grievances were filed.

Trends and/or Comments: No trends noted. One of the youth we interviewed said they were aware that the grievance process existed but never submitted one because felt that any issues were minor and not worth filing a complaint. Although the current processThe JJDCP recommends putting the grievance forms somewhere they can be accessed.

Correspondence / Telephone

Access US Mail?: Yes No Details: _____

Postage Free?: Yes No Details: _____

Incoming/Outgoing Mail (Screened? Confidential?): Yes No Details: The staff open but do not read incoming mail just to find out if there are objects in the letters. Letters are confidential. Outgoing letters are sent to a central office to be stamped and mailed.

Access to Telephone?: Yes No Details: Every youth has a phone call list (social worker, parents, probation). Youth can call at breaks and can make calls every night. Youth may have a cell phone if they are over 18. They keep the phone in their locked personal box and are not available all the time. Some youth would like to have the ability to have a cell phone all the time to listen to music and use apps, but they do understand that the restrictions are necessary.

Visiting

Visiting Schedule: Weekdays _____ Weekends _____ Special Events _____

Comments: There is no specific visiting schedule. Visitors may come even during school. Most common visiting time is after the day treatment programming.

Do all minors have access to visitation?: Yes No Details: Yes, but there is a visitation list. Friends aren't allowed to visit, for example.

Under what circumstances would visitation be restricted?: _____

Are visitation logs kept?: Yes No Details: A part of the daily log book and progress notes are kept.

Adequate Space: Acceptable Unacceptable: _____

Staff Supervision: Acceptable Unacceptable: Visits can be supervised, but usually aren't

Privacy Provided: Yes No Details: There is an annex, the two classrooms and visits can happen in the courtyard or they can go back to the youth's room if deemed appropriate

Games or Activities Provided: Yes No Details: _____

School

Number of Full-Time Instructors: 2 Full Time Instructors

Number of Full-Time Instructional Aides: 1 Full Time Instructional Aide

Number of Tutors (paid? Volunteer?): None

Frequency of Substitute Teachers: Rarely Number of youth attending School: 12

Average Classroom size: 5 - 6

Max Classroom Size: The maximum classroom size is actually 12. However, normally there are 5 or 6 students assigned to a class.

Number of youth on independent study: None Reason: Not applicable

Number of youth not attending school: None

Reason: The expectation is that all Canyon Oaks residents attend school daily. However, due to the programs therapeutic nature, students may "self-select" to not attend. That being said, no students are ever placed in an independent student type of situation.

Describe the general atmosphere of the classrooms: Classrooms observed appeared calm and orderly while the relationship between students and teaching staff seemed very appropriate and quite positive.

Adequate Supplies, Books, Paper, Computer? : Acceptable Unacceptable: _____

Are youth given access to Computers/Internet? Yes No

Details (when, for what purpose, supervision): While unsupervised use of the Internet is not permitted, students do use the program's computers to access the recently implemented Personalized learning platform, that is available for all students. Students are also

permitted to access the Internet, supervised by staff, in order to do research for various assignments.

Describe the relationship between school and facility and probation staff: While probation officers do visit the program, there is not permanent probation presence at Canyon Oaks.

Describe access to school, recreation, etc. for youth confined to their rooms: Because Canyon Oaks is a therapeutic setting, behaviors that, in other programs, would result in room confinement, are dealt with by staff in other ways. Accordingly, no students are ever confined to their rooms and denied access to the school program.

When is school held on the unit instead of in the classroom? Not applicable.

Post High School/GED:

Are there educational opportunities available for youth who have completed high school or their GED? Yes No Describe: While these opportunities are available, they are rarely used as very few students receive a diploma or complete the GED while at the program. When older Canyon Oaks students leave the program they most often transition to resources and programs provided by the Department of Rehabilitation. The Workability program also assists those students interested in pursuing additional educational opportunities.

Are youth given information and counseling regarding community college and four-year college options? Yes No Describe: Through the Personalized Learning Platform, a college and career plan is developed for each student. These services are also made available through the Workability Program.

Are youth given information/counseling about financial aid options for college? Yes No Describe: This information, as applicable, is also available to students through the Workability Program.

Are youth given resources for college entrance exam prep when appropriate? Yes No Describe: Provided as applicable.

Are youth able to take courses for college credit online? Yes No Describe: This type of opportunity is not currently available.

Special Education/IEP Programs:

How many youth in the facility have an Individualized Education Program (IEP)? All students.

Do credentialed special education teachers participate in lesson planning and curriculum development? Yes No

Are regular IEP meetings held? Yes No

Are parents notified of these meetings? Yes No

Are parents permitted to attend these meetings? Yes No

Describe the most common obstacle to IEP compliance: Cases involving Canyon Oaks students are very complicated and often involve the services of many different educational and therapeutic specialists, attorneys, probation officers and representatives from the Department of Rehabilitation and the Golden Gate Regional Center. Accordingly, arranging a time when all of the stakeholders necessary to the discussion can be present together is often a challenge.

Comments: Operated by the San Mateo County Office of Education's Court and Community School's Division in collaboration with San Mateo County Mental Health Services, the school at Canyon Oaks now provides a safe, nurturing and therapeutic learning environment designed to meet the education and social-emotional needs of its diverse student population. Utilizing standards aligned materials, and featuring both whole group and individualized learning platforms, the staff at Canyon Oaks is able to effectively deliver content instruction to all students enrolled, despite the wide range of student ages and ability levels present. The relationship between students and staff appears to be both positive and effective while the commitment of all staff members is clearly evident.

The youth reported liking the school. They felt that the school was leveled well to accommodate youth with different levels of aptitude with the subject matters. The teachers did well with the fact that they had a lot of different youth to teach and managed separate assignments well. One youth wanted a little more free time in school to use the computer for research (but recognized that some people would use that free time to mess around with something other than schoolwork).

Summary and Comments

General comments or concerns that should be noted that have not already been addressed?:

We were impressed by the warmth of the staff and the rapport they have with the youth. The management of Canyon Oaks is professional, compassionate and dedicated. The staff enjoy their jobs and are eager to learn new techniques to better care for the young people in their charge. The facility takes on youth with many different needs – they described one youth who would not talk for the first several months but finally began to do so. Those kinds of results are impressive and demonstrate the value of Canyon Oaks. The youth we interviewed felt cared for and supported. They felt like they had grown and learned a lot from their time at Canyon Oaks and found the facility to be better than any other they'd been to. Canyon Oaks is an exemplary program.

The facilities are nicely maintained but need some work as described in the opening summary, especially storage space such as a shed and some treatment to the area that is now dead grass. The paint and mural projects on the walls of the outside recreation area were created by the youth with help from the art therapist. The murals are beautiful.

The staff is to be commended for their commitment to the youth. Most staff stay 10 years or more and have adapted to the changing needs of the residents and the evolution in the way care is provided. They are also to be commended for taking youth on field trips that take advantage of the beauty of nature and also for making the effort to have dogs come to Canyon Oaks to give the residents some canine interaction.

The staff also wanted to commend the San Mateo County Sheriff's department. When there are issues with residents acting in a concerning manner (potentially abusive behavior), the Sheriff's department is called to assist the Canyon Oaks staff. The Sheriff's department has been compassionate and shows excellent de-escalation skills.

Signature of Commissioner(s) preparing this report:

/s/ Al Serrato Date: 11/29/16

/s/ Richard Boitano Date: 11/29/16

/s/ Michele Gustafson Date: 11/29/16

ATTACHMENTS

ATTACHMENT 1: SCHOOL SUPPLEMENT

How/Where do students receive instruction when school is over-crowded or it is raining? **Not applicable to Canyon Oaks as all services are provided within one building.**

How many minutes of instruction per week do students receive? **The length of the school day is compliant with the requirements of the California Department of Education**

Do students attend school within three (3) days of placement? **Yes – A great deal of planning goes in to the placement of each student. Accordingly, staff is ready for their arrival and they begin to attend immediately.**

How are limited English-speaking students identified and served? How soon are these services provided once the student has been identified as non-English proficient? **As noted above, a great deal of pre-planning goes into the placement of a student at Canyon Oaks. Accordingly staff has access to school records and is made aware of any English Learner issues prior to the arrival of the student. Staff members are currently receiving professional development on the use of Integrated Strategies. Such work is currently a focus of the Court and Community School's Professional Learning Communities program. An ELD Support Teacher is also available to coach teachers in this area. At the same time, The Court and Community School Program has made services to English Learner students an LCAP priority.**

Propose areas of Commendation:

- **The Canyons Oaks staff is to be commended for providing a safe and nurturing learning environment for all students.**
- **The Canyon Oaks instructional staff is to be commended for their efforts in providing Common Core aligned books, materials and academic instruction to all students.**
- **The Canyon Oaks instructional staff is to be commended for the efforts being made to individualize instruction in order to provide the most beneficial educational experience for all students.**

Propose areas of Improvement:

None noted

Student Interview

Students interviewed ranged in grade levels from 7th to 12th and in time of attendance at Canyon Oaks from 2 years to one week. According to the program's teachers, students display a wide variety of learning styles and academic abilities. However, students interviewed spoke openly and candidly about their academic experiences at Canyon Oaks. A summary of their responses is listed below:

What are you studying?

- *Students report studying Math, Science, English and World History. The academic needs of each student are addressed in an individualized manner, with each student having his/her own "academic playlist" of readings and assignments.*

Compare the Canyon Oaks School program to that of your home school.

- *Students generally agreed that the academic program at Canyon Oaks compares favorably with that available at their home school. Students felt that the wide range of ages and academic ability levels present in class makes group discussion difficult. However, they further commented that the ability of the school's two teachers to individualize academics helped to effectively address this issue.*

What do you like about the Canyon Oaks School?

- *Student quote: "There is more one-on-one here. Teachers are able to meet needs better here than at a regular school because of individual help".*
- *Student quote: "Teachers make accommodations. If we have problems, they give us time to work things out".*
- *Student quote: "I'm earning more credits here than before. If I didn't have this opportunity, I wouldn't be where I am now".*
- *Several students also noted that they appreciate the opportunity to receive and use home passes in order to remain connected to family and friends.*

What do you miss about your home school?

- *Students reported missing the variety of social opportunities available. Students also reported "missing family and friends". One student favored more academic rigor.*

How could your Canyon Oaks School experience be improved?

- *Most students agreed that the Canyon Oaks Educational Program is meeting their current education needs. They also spoke very highly of the commitment displayed by the programs teachers and other staff. While several students indicated that they would appreciate more "computer time", satisfaction with the current program was clearly evident.*