

Juvenile Restorative Justice Policy Implementation: A County Comparison

Anna Joy Griffin

Point Loma Nazarene University

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## **Introduction**

In 2022, headlines across California rang alarm bells, stating “California is returning incarcerated juveniles to counties; San Diego isn’t ready” (San Diego Union Tribune) and “Changes to California’s youth prison system prove difficult to implement.” These headlines are referencing a bill passed in 2020 where incarcerated youth were to be sent from the Division of Juvenile Justice, a State detention center, to local county detention centers. My interest and concern peaked; if San Diego county “isn’t ready,” what happens to the youth when they are relocated, will they have a safe place to stay, will they have the programs and services they need available to them, will local detention centers be staffed properly? This led me to begin a year-long study into the implementation of Senate Bill 823, which instituted the relocation of youth from state to local detention centers.

This study explores the policy implementation process and how policy intent is interpreted when passed down from state legislators to local leaders. The results will aid in the overall understanding of state-to-local implementation practices, whether bills passed down like this are consistently implemented, and how much regional variance occurs. Additionally, conclusions will allow lawmakers to better understand how their policies may be interpreted. It will give them more direction on where they might need more or less specificity to allow for successful implementation relevant to a locality’s context. This study is valuable because it identifies best practices for future similar bills, as well as any gaps or obstacles identified.

## **Research Question**

How has the policy implementation of a restorative justice model differed in two counties in Southern California?

## **Background**

On September 30, 2020, California Governor Gavin Newsom signed Senate Bill 823. This bill began the closure of the state of California's Division of Juvenile Justice (DJJ), which officially ceased juvenile intake on July 1, 2021. The DJJ was a network of detention centers for California's most serious juvenile offenders, which includes youth who have committed crimes such as rape, robbery, murder, and other serious sex crimes (Shouse Law Group, 2023). Under this legislation, the remaining youth in the DJJ facilities would begin the relocation process to their home counties on July 1, 2021. Counties would also be expected to offer housing, programming, and treatment for the returning youth and any incoming youth entering the system.

The counties had time to plan to accommodate the realigned youth through the Juvenile Justice Realignment Block Grant (JJRBG) Annual Plans. According to the text of SB 823, which established the JJRBG program, this would aid counties in county-based custody, care, and supervision of realigned youth. To be eligible for funding, each county was required to create a subcommittee under their county's already-existing Juvenile Justice Coordinating Council (JJCC). The JJCC subcommittee would then create a plan describing the "facilities, programs, placements, services, supervision, and reentry strategies needed to provide appropriate rehabilitation and supervision services" for realigned youth (SB 823). The initial JJRBG plan was to be submitted to the Office of Youth and Community Restoration (OYCR) by January 1, 2022. The JJRBG annual plan is due on May 1<sup>st</sup> of each year, and each county subcommittee will continue to monitor progress and implementation, adjusting their plan as needed.

By mandate, the subcommittee for the JJRBG plan is to be composed of the chief probation officer and one representative from the District Attorney's office, the Public Defender's office, the Department of Social Services, the Department of Mental Health, the

County Office of Education, and a representative from the court, as well as at least three relevant community members. The Office of Youth and Community Restoration (OYCR) was created with the implementation of SB 823 and is responsible for overseeing the JJBRG plans and providing support for counties, among other duties. For the 2021-2022 year, \$39.9 million was appropriated from the state's General Fund for the JJRBG to address the needs of California counties in implementation. The amount of funds offered from 2023 to 2025 increases each year to accommodate the realignment of youth.

The principal intent of SB 823 is to move youth closer to their families and communities and ensure they receive age-appropriate treatment (BSCC RFA for the Youth Program and Facilities Application Package, 2021). This legislation is based on multiple studies showing the benefits of youth staying connected to their communities, including reducing recidivism rates. SB 823 also requires the use of "evidence-based and promising practices and programs" that improve the outcomes of youth and public safety (SB 823, 2020). Other goals include reducing the transfer of youth into the adult criminal justice system, reducing and eliminating ethnic and racial disparities, and reducing the use of confinement by utilizing community-based responses and interventions.

In the latest recidivism report for youth released by the California Division of Juvenile Justice (DJJ) in 2021, the data show that in the three years following the release of a cohort of juvenile offenders in 2014-2015, 76% of the released cohort was arrested (168 youth), 50.5% were convicted (111 youth), and 28.6% (63 youth) were returned to state custody in the DJJ. When compared to California's adult recidivism rates in 2012-2013 from a report released in 2017, 46.1% of previous offenders were convicted again and 22.2% of previous offenders returned to prison. As you can see, the rate of recidivism for youth in the DJJ system in

California is high, and the state legislature enacting this policy could prove to be one step towards reducing this trend overall.

In this study, I examine how the policy implementation of the restorative justice model presented in SB 823 differs in two counties in Southern California. The counties chosen are Orange County and San Diego County, based on similar population size and proximity to each other. The two counties have a slight difference in their political makeup; Orange County's electorate contains 37% Democrats and 33% Republicans, while San Diego's electorate comprises 41% Democrats and 27% Republicans.

In this paper, I examine the initial policy implementation stage through a case study comparing the 2021-2022 JJRBG plans of San Diego and Orange counties. First, I conducted a document analysis of SB 823 and the plans of the respective counties to compare the policy's stated intent with the initial implementation process. Expert interviews of the JJCC subcommittee members are also conducted to provide context for the differences and similarities of the counties' plans.

This study explores the implementation process and how policy intent is interpreted when passed down from the state to individual counties. The results will aid in the overall understanding of state-to-local implementation practices, whether bills passed down like this are consistently implemented, and how much regional variance occurs. Additionally, conclusions will allow lawmakers to understand better how their policies may be interpreted. It will give them more direction on where they might need more or less specificity to allow for successful implementation relevant to a locality's context. This study is valuable because it identifies best practices for future similar bills, as well as any gaps or obstacles identified.

## **Literature Review**

My literature review dives into what restorative justice is and how it compares to retributive justice. Additionally, Strang's restorative justice models of victim-offender mediation, group conferencing, and peacemaking or sentencing circles, are explored. I also look into three case studies, both in the US and abroad, of implementation of juvenile restorative justice policy. Finally, I examine policy implementation theory, including top-down and bottom-up approaches for policy implementation analysis.

### *Introduction to Juvenile Justice & Restorative Justice*

No one definition is fully comprehensive for restorative justice because of how versatile and unique these programs can look, depending on the context. However, the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) lists values that most literature would back up when guiding restorative practices. These values include reparation, respect, voluntariness, inclusion, empowerment, safety, accountability, and transformation (UNODC, 2023). These values are used formally by the Department of Justice in Canada but represent the values of restorative justice as a whole. The UNODC defines restorative justice as “an inclusive, flexible, and participatory approach to crime that can be complementary or an alternative to the conventional criminal justice process” (UNODC, 2023).

Restorative justice differs from retributive justice in a few ways. Restorative justice focuses on the victim by giving them a say in the criminal justice process. As a victim-centered approach, the person or people harmed can have an increased say in the criminal justice process when it comes to the offender's sentencing. For example, the victim can ask the sentencing body to reduce or extend the sentence.

Restorative justice opens the door to restoration and clarity for the victim and should ultimately empower the victim (Braithwaite, et. al., 2010). They gain clarity when they can have controlled conversations with the offender. They can ask any questions they might have about the motive of the offender or more about the offender's background story if they wish to do so. This process can lead some victims to experience closure and healing to a greater extent than what they have experienced with the mainstream retributive justice system.

Restorative justice is a more holistic approach to justice that allows the offender to accept responsibility for what they have done and potentially speak directly with those they have harmed. Restorative justice practices recognize that criminal behavior “not only violates the law but also harms victims and the community” (UNODC, 2023). Restorative justice gives victims a voice in the criminal justice process and can lead to greater clarity, forgiveness, and listening. It also allows the offender to take responsibility for their actions and face the victim who has to suffer the consequences of the offender's crime. Restorative justice is transformative and comprehensive, allowing for healing and growth in both the victim and offender.

### *Restorative Justice Models*

Common restorative justice models include victim-offender mediation, group conferencing, and peacemaking or sentencing circles (Strang, 2017). These models are victim-centered and impactful for the offender. Restorative justice can provide healing and transformation to both the victim and offender.

Victim-offender mediation is a restorative process where the victim and offender voluntarily meet with a trained mediator and discuss the harms done. It is also used to devise a plan in order for the offender to be restored to the community. Victim-offender mediation is a

program that is used widely in different variations. There are over 300 programs of this nature in North America and over 500 in Europe (Strang, 2017).

Group conferencing is a restorative method that originated in New Zealand as “family group conferences” (FGCs). This method also allows the victim and offender to meet with a trained facilitator voluntarily. The main difference is that each party's family, friends, and key supporters also attend this meeting (Strang, 2017). This allows for increased community support and includes storytelling from each participant on how the incident impacted their life.

Peacemaking or sentencing circles is the final most common restorative method and consists of a meeting not only with the victim, offender, and key friends and family but also with community members like judges, police officers, and more, which involves even more of the community in this process (Strang, 2017). This high degree of community involvement in the offender’s sentencing, transition out of prison, and more ideally leads to better outcomes like lower recidivism rates and the ability for the victim to heal and move on from the harm inflicted upon them.

These restorative practices have a few elements in common. They all promote group settings to support the victim and offender, as well as to address sentencing, conflict, and juvenile offender transition back into society, among other circumstances. These group settings suggest that family and community involvement in an offender’s life will allow them to feel supported and potentially lower rates of recidivism. SB 823 sends incarcerated youth from the DJJ back to their respective counties based on the idea that this restorative model will lead to more family and community involvement in the youth’s lives, which will help them change their behaviors and reduce potential recidivism.

*Case Studies in Restorative Justice*

In Australia, a restorative justice experiment called RISE showed that restorative justice practices reduced reoffending significantly more successfully than traditional court procedures in the case of juvenile violence (Strang, 2017). The court seemed to be more effective in reducing recidivism for property theft as well as for drunk driving. However, in both the property and violence experiments, victims were significantly more satisfied with the restorative justice methods over the court. These results have since gained national and international attention due to their rigorous assessment of restorative justice, and restorative justice practices have been implemented across Australia.

Ultimately, the literature paints a picture to show us that restorative methods and practices were widely adopted around the world in the past 30 years; however, there is not enough conclusive evidence to determine whether this justice system will conclusively reduce recidivism (Mcivor 2007). There are many promising studies that this model could reduce recidivism, and even if it is not substantial, there are other clear benefits to restorative justice including victim and offender support, reconciliation, and transformation.

#### *Restorative Justice for Juveniles in the United States*

Multiple initiatives in the United States have drawn upon restorative justice practices, methods, and values with positive results. In New York City, the ‘Close to Home’ initiative launched in 2011, which brought the majority of juvenile offenders away from state facilities and closer to their home county or city. This initiative aimed to allow families and friends to play a more integral role in youth treatment and rehabilitation (Annie E. Casey Foundation, 2018). Prior to the initiative, recidivism rates in New York were as high as 80% after release. Following the program, 91% of youth passed their classes, there is increased engagement of youth and family members, increased access to specialized services to meet the needs of youth, and 76% of youth

have so far successfully transitioned home to a parent or family member (Annie E. Casey Foundation, 2018). Between 2016 and 2017, there was a 41% decrease in youth Absent Without Leave (AWOL) from limited secure placements, a 38% decrease in physical incidents, a 93% academic achievement rate, and a 91% participation rate in community supervision programs (JJIE, 2018).

A case study in 2018 at Columbia University on New York City's Close to Home initiative found overwhelmingly positive results. Between 2012 and 2016, there was a 53% decline in youth arrests, a 37% decline in youth detention, a 68% decline in out-of-home placements, and an elimination of placing youth in state facilities (Weissman, 2018).

Texas initiated a similar juvenile justice program, which sent the majority of youth in state facilities back to their home counties. Between 2007 and 2012, the number of youth in state-secure facilities reduced by 65%. In a study of Texas's juvenile justice system, Fabelo, et. al., analyzed a dataset of 1.3 million individual case records over the span of 8 years. They found that youth incarcerated in state-run facilities are 21% more likely to be re-arrested than those who remain in facilities closer to home (Fabelo et al., 2015). Additionally, youth released from state prisons are three times more likely to commit a felony than youth under community supervision in their hometown (Fabelo et al., 2015). This report's evidence suggests that counties could lower recidivism rates by housing youth closer to their homes and assigning youth to appropriate skill-building, treatment, and surveillance programs.

#### *Overview of Policy Implementation Analysis*

In classical implementation theory, two approaches are generally used to analyze policy implementation: top-down and bottom-up. The top-down approach examines the extent to which policy objectives set by elite government officials are achieved over time (Mackenzie et al.,

2019). Mazmanian and Sabatier (1989) argue that the determinants of successful implementation are the “tractability of the problem, the ability of the statute to structure implementation, and the nonstatutory variables affecting implementation.” They argue that policy goals should be clear and consistent, the number of implementing actors should be limited, the amount of change necessary should be limited, and the implementing actors should already support the policy’s goals (Matland, 1995). The top-down model is criticized for being too focused on the elite creators of the policy rather than the local actors and implementers. Additionally, it is criticized for not considering political factors and local policy implementation barriers, which are both essential to study when considering the success or failure of a policy.

The bottom-up approach focuses on the local officials and professionals who implement the policy on the ground and determines success based on broader measures rather than specific policy prescriptions. The bottom-up approach studies policy from the view of the target population and local implementers (Matland, 1995). Bottom-up approaches look at what policy application or ‘street-level bureaucracy’ looks like and how the local implementation of policy may be successful or unsuccessful, but this cannot necessarily be determined exclusively by checking off a box set by a politician. This approach recognizes that there will be variation when a policy is implemented nationally or state-wide at a local level. Palumbo, Maynard-Moody, and Wright (1984) suggest that when local-level implementers are not free to adapt policies to local conditions, the policy is most likely to fail. Bottom-up implementation specifically studies the goals, strategies, activities, and contacts of the actors involved in the local implementation process (Matland, 1995). This is because micro-level or local-level policy implementation directly affects the people who live in local communities where policies play out. One criticism of this model is that the higher-level officials should determine the goals and success of a policy

because they were elected to have this power in our democracy. Another criticism is that it overemphasizes the level of local autonomy (Matland, 1995).

Markers of success for the bottom-up and top-down approaches differ. A successful policy implementation in a top-down analysis examines specific outcomes tied to stated policy goals. A successful policy implementation in a bottom-up analysis is a much looser interpretation of success. A policy could have “positive effects” and be named a success in the bottom-up model (Matland, 1995).

Matland attempts to categorize how researchers should analyze policy implementation with an ‘Ambiguity-Conflict Model’ (Matland, 1995). This model characterizes policy as either low or high conflict and low or high ambiguity and then determines, based on these characteristics, whether the top-down or bottom-up model should be used to analyze the policy.

## *Synthesizing Implementation Literature*

### **Exhibit 1**

### **Ambiguity-Conflict Matrix: Policy Implementation Processes**

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		CONFLICT	
		Low	High
AMBIGUITY	Low	<i>Administrative Implementation</i>  Resources  Example: Smallpox eradication	<i>Political Implementation</i>  Power  Example: Busing
	High	<i>Experimental Implementation</i>  Contextual Conditions  Example: Headstart	<i>Symbolic Implementation</i>  Coalition Strength  Example: Community action agencies

In the case of this study, SB 823 is characterized in the model as “Experimental Implementation” because it is highly ambiguous with low conflict. The policy is highly ambiguous because its goals are broad, and it was made with open language that local policy officials could interpret and shape to meet their specific local conditions. Because of this ambiguity, the outcomes of SB 823 may vary significantly between each county in California. Context is key when analyzing policy implementation in each county and determining the

individual and overall success of the policy. The policy will likely work a lot better in some counties than in others, depending on their unique contextual conditions. Matland describes policies under experimental implementation as “policies with clear and widely supported goals but with unclear means of implementation.” SB 823 has widely supported goals of reducing youth recidivism in California and supporting youth in the criminal justice system. However, the policy implementation is unclear and left up to local counties to institute. Because SB 823 was recently implemented, I can only study the initial stages of implementation. Ideally, this policy should be studied over a more extended period of time, and this project will be the first of multiple longitudinal studies on this policy and its success.

Matland argues that the bottom-up theory is the ideal implementation analysis model for experimental implementation because of its emphasis on local-level actors and tolerance for ambiguity. I will use this bottom-up model to explore SB 823 implementation at the local level in San Diego and Orange. I will use the expertise of Matland, Mackenzie, Sabatier, Hijern, and

more to analyze SB 823 using the bottom-up approach.

*Top-Down and Bottom-Up Approaches to Implementation Research* 33

TABLE 2. Comparison between top-down and bottom-up approaches

	<i>Top-Down (Sabatier &amp; Mazmanian)</i>	<i>Bottom-up (Hjern et al.)</i>
Initial Focus	(Central) Government decision, e.g., new pollution control law	Local implementation structure (network) involved in a policy area, e.g., pollution control
Identification of major actors in the process	From top down and from gov. out to private sector (although importance attached to causal theory also calls for accurate understanding of target group's incentive structure)	From bottom (govt. and private) up
Evaluative criteria	Focus on extent of attainment of formal objectives (carefully analyzed). May look at other politically significant criteria and unintended consequences, but these are optional.	Much less clear. Basically anything the analyst chooses which is somehow relevant to the policy issue or problem. Certainly does not require any careful analysis of official govt. decision(s).
Overall Focus	How does one steer system to achieve (top) policy-maker's intended policy results?	Strategic interaction among multiple actors in a policy network.

I will be using the top-down approach to determine specific evaluative criteria and broad goals from policymakers. However, to do a robust top-down analysis, the policy will need to be fully implemented, which it is currently not. Because I am analyzing the initial stages of policy implementation, and because the policy I am analyzing is categorized as “experimental implementation,” the bottom-up approach is the better model for analysis, although the broader goals and policy prescriptions from the top-down approach can be analyzed and used as a loose guide for success.

## **Methodology**

### *Introduction*

This study utilizes a combination of qualitative methods and descriptive research. I conducted a case study analysis of two counties, Orange County and San Diego County. I compared how a restorative justice model described in Senate Bill (SB) 823 was implemented in these counties. I did this by conducting elite interviews with Juvenile Justice Coordinating Council (JJCC) subcommittee members who formulated Juvenile Justice Realignment Block Grant (JJRBG) plans to implement SB 823. This JJCC subcommittee was specifically created in order to write out the JJRBG plans. I interviewed JJCC subcommittee members and transcribed the interviews in order to analyze the data by looking for themes and key phrases. I organized what I found in these interviews using Excel spreadsheets. I also conducted document analysis and comparison of SB 823 and the JJRBG grant plans for San Diego County and Orange County.

### *Research Question*

How has the policy implementation of a restorative justice model differed in two counties in Southern California?

### *Participants*

The participants for expert interviews were JJCC subcommittee members in the counties of San Diego and Orange. Each JJCC subcommittee includes the county's chief probation officer, a representative from the District Attorney's office, the Public Defender's office, the Department of Social Services, the Department of Mental Health, the County Office of Education, a representative from the court, as well as at least three relevant community members. Orange County's subcommittee consisted of 11 members, while San Diego's subcommittee consisted of 10 members. I contacted the JJCC subcommittee members through email and

LinkedIn. The email of each subcommittee member is public information which is listed on each grant plan. I received IRB approval for this project through Point Loma Nazarene University.

The approved email and consent form sent to each potential participant can be viewed in Appendix A. I received 4 replies out of the 21 subcommittee members, 3 from San Diego and 1 from Orange County.

### *Interviewees*

I received 4 interviews total, three over zoom and one over email. The interviewees are anonymous per my IRB.

### *County Comparison*

Orange and San Diego were the counties I chose to compare out of all the counties in California implementing the bill because they are close in proximity, size, political makeup, and demographics. Orange County has about 3.17 million people living there, while San Diego County has about 3.29 million people. The population size is comparable. San Diego has a 10% poverty rate and a median household income of \$88,240 (Data USA, 2021). Orange County has a 9.9% poverty rate and a median household income of \$100,485. Orange County's ethnic group population breakdown is 39% White, 34% Latino, 21% Asian, and 6% other. San Diego County's ethnic group population breakdown is 44% White, 34% Latino, 17% Asian, and 5% other (Data USA, 2021). In January 2024, Orange County's electorate comprised 37% Democrats, 33% Republicans (SOS.ca.gov, 2024). In January 2024, San Diego's electorate consisted of 41% Democrats and 27% Republicans (SOS.ca.gov, 2024). These counties make for a good case study to compare how two counties differ in their policy outcomes despite similar resources and demographics.

### *Materials*

- Senate Bill 823
- JIRBG Plan for San Diego and Orange counties
- Interview Content from 4 interviews
- Interview Questions

### *Interview Questions*

The questions in the interview list were based upon an initial review of SB 823 and both San Diego County and Orange County’s JIRBG plans. I initially noticed that Orange County seemed lacking in its JIRBG Plan research and their plans to eliminate racial and ethnic disparities. I split questions into categories, with one question in the personal category, two in restorative justice, five in planning and implementation, three in culturally responsive, and one other. For the planning and implementation questions, I asked about the obstacles and implementation barriers the JJCC subcommittee identified and how they were able to plan accordingly. For the culturally responsive questions, I asked how much of a factor racial and ethnic disparities were in the research and planning phase of designing the JIRBG Plan. I also asked what the subcommittee interpreted “culturally responsive” services to mean in the context of SB 823. I asked questions about the language of the bill because the intent of SB 823 was broad in some areas, which could potentially make implementation vary greatly between counties due to differences in interpretation. A full list of the interview questions can be found in Appendix B.

### *Data Collection Procedures*

#### A. Interviews

The interviews took place over the span of three months, from November 2023 to January 2024. The interviews occurred over Zoom or over email if the participant preferred this

method. In total, three interviews were conducted over Zoom, and one was conducted via email. The Zoom interviews were also recorded for future transcription and analysis. The Zoom interviews were all between 20 and 25 minutes long. I received IRB approval to conduct interviews, which can be found in Appendix C.

## B. Documents

SB 823 and the JJRBG plans for Orange and San Diego counties are all publicly available documents. These documents are on the Office of Youth and Community Restoration (OYCR) website under “Juvenile Justice Realignment Block Grant County Plans.” The JJRBG plan for Orange County was 22 pages, and the JJRBG Plan for San Diego County was 20 pages. These plans were comprehensive documents demonstrating how each county would use the funds provided by the JJRBG. These plans had to be initially submitted to the OYCR for 2021-2022. However, each plan is a work in progress and can and will be revisited by the committee for the next few years as the plans get implemented locally.

## *Data Analysis Procedures*

### A. Policy and County Plans

I used document analysis to analyze SB 823 and each county’s JJRBG plan. I used Excel to organize what I found and compared the policy's intent to each county JJRBG plan. I read through SB 823 and found five specific overall goals for the policy in Section 1, part e. I also found six specific JJRBG intended goals for the grant money in Section 1995, part c. I listed these goals in the far left column of the Excel spreadsheet. I then read through both county plans and when they met a particular SB 823 or JJRBG intent, I documented this by writing down exactly how they were succeeding in meeting the intent. After fully filling out the Excel sheet for

Orange County and San Diego County, I compared the two counties in a third column. I also categorized the intents into related categories and themes by color.

#### B. Interviews

For interview content, document analysis was used. I used the same Excel spreadsheet format as for the analysis of the JJRBG plans, with the far left column occupied by SB 823 intent, and JJRBG funding intent. I compared the interviews from the two counties by identifying similarities and differences in their plans. I also analyzed the interviews one by one by looking at each question individually and comparing the responses from each interviewee in both San Diego County and Orange County. This allowed me to identify differences and similarities in the answers of interviewees from the same county, as well as compare the answers from both counties.

#### C. Comparison of intent of policy, county plans, and interviews

I used the same Excel sheet format in order to compare the policy intent, the plans' implementation, and the interviewees' answers. I compared the three areas by looking for differences and similarities between the counties and even within the counties. In a fourth column I compared San Diego and Orange counties by discussing their individual obstacles and success. I also found exactly how each county met the intent of the bill, and how much evidence they had to support that they met this intent, whether it be "none," "some," or "significant." If the plan showed no evidence of meeting a certain intent, they would go into the "none" category. If the county briefly addressed or had a little evidence that they met the specific intent, they would be in the "some" evidence category. And if the plan showed a lot of evidence that the county was attempting to meet the desired SB 823 intent, then that section was marked as "significant." This chart can be viewed later in the paper. This larger level analysis allowed me

to identify each county's main obstacles and strengths based upon both document analyses of county plans and interview data.

#### D. Comparison

Matland argues that bottom-up theory is the ideal implementation analysis model for experimental implementation because of its emphasis on local-level actors and tolerance for ambiguity. This bottom-up model was used to explore SB 823 implementation at the local level in the counties of San Diego and Orange. The expertise of Matland, Mackenzie, Sabatier, and Hijern were helpful resources while conducting the analysis of SB 823 using the bottom-up approach.

The top-down approach was utilized to determine certain evaluative criteria and broad goals from policymakers. However, to do a robust top-down analysis, the policy will need to be fully implemented, which it is currently not. Because I am analyzing the initial stages of policy implementation, and because the policy I am analyzing is categorized as “experimental implementation,” the bottom-up approach is the better model for analysis. However, the broader goals and policy prescriptions from the top-down approach can be analyzed and used as a loose guide for success.

#### *Limitations*

One main limitation to the data was the amount of JJCC subcommittee members available or willing to be interviewed. Out of ten total, I interviewed three subcommittee members from San Diego County. For Orange County, I interviewed one subcommittee member out of eleven total. I reached out to each subcommittee member three times through email, separated by two weeks each. I also reached out to most subcommittee members through LinkedIn. Four Orange County subcommittee members responded, but only one agreed to an

interview, two declined to an interview, and one was planning the interview but could not attend. I was diligent in requesting and pursuing interviews, but due to the availability of subcommittee members, I only conducted one interview from Orange County. However, having at least one interview from each county is beneficial and I worked with the data I could gather.

Fortunately, the 20-22 page JJRBG plans from San Diego County and Orange County are also comprehensive enough for o complete an an analysis of the implementation stages of SB 823. The interviews provide further insight into the planning process. Additionally, my research should not be the only research on this policy, but instead be the first of multiple studies on the implementation of this policy.

## **Findings: Cross-Case Analysis and Elite Interviews**

### **A. Introduction**

This section will describe what findings through my research on the JJRBG plans in San Diego and Orange counties, as well as what discoveries emerged in my interviews and interview analysis. I begin by discussing the SB 823 intent, followed by the county plans, then the interviews, and finishing with a summary of findings.

### **B. SB 823 Intent**

SB 823 was initially passed in 2020 by the California Assembly with 79 votes; 54 yeas, 16 nays, 9 non-voters. It also passed the California Senate with 40 votes; 21 yeas, 13 nays, and 6 non-voters. The bill stated that starting July 1, 2021, no further commitments of youth to the Division of Juvenile Justice (DJJ) could occur. SB 823 imposed a state-mandated local program, meaning that the justice-involved youth currently residing in the DJJ would be sent back to their home counties to complete their sentences by June of 2023. This bill mandated that a subcommittee of the JJCC for each county be created to develop a plan for implementation by January of 2022.

#### *Section 1 Intention*

Section 1 of SB 823 states that evidence shows incarcerated youth are more successful when they remain connected to their families and communities and that this bill intends to reduce recidivism and increase youth support. Therefore, the DJJ will close, and the OYCR will open to support the transition from DJJ to county-specific incarceration. It notes that counties will receive funding to support this transition if they develop a JJCC subcommittee and JJRBG Plan.

The language is as follows:

(e) It is the intent of the Legislature and the administration for counties to

- use evidence-based and promising practices and programs that
  - improve the outcomes of youth and public safety,
  - reduce the transfer of youth into the adult criminal justice system,
  - ensure that dispositions are in the least restrictive appropriate environment,
  - reduce and then eliminate racial and ethnic disparities,
  - reduce the use of confinement in the juvenile justice system by utilizing community-based responses and interventions

The excerpt above is taken from Section 1, part e, and this section of the intent is what I used in my research to cross-examine the intent of SB 823 with the JJRBG plans and interviews. Part e above states broad intent that may be difficult to decipher precisely what is required to meet these goals. This open-endedness is likely because this policy had to be enacted in every county in California. When policy intent is too narrow, it can be challenging for counties to adapt the policy to their current systems. However, when policy intent is too broad, this can undermine the policy's purpose and lead to wide variation when it comes to implementation.

The other parts of section 1, parts a through d, and f, were a lot more specific than part e, and each county I analyzed was able to meet these intents. This included ending the practice of placing youth in confinement facilities operated by private entities who profit off of imprisonment, ensuring youth have access to postsecondary education, and keeping the youth fire camp at Pine Grove open and functioning to train justice-involved youth in wildland firefighting skills.

*JJRBG Plan Requirements – Chapter 1.7 Juvenile Justice Realignment Block Grant*

For the 2021-2022 fiscal year, \$39,949,000 is allocated from the General Fund for counties to provide appropriate rehabilitative and supervision services. The by-county

distribution is also discussed in this section. For the 2022-23 fiscal year, \$118,339,000 is set aside for this fund. For the 2023-24 fiscal year, \$192,037,000 will be set aside. For the 2024-25 fiscal year and each year thereafter, \$208,800,000 will be appropriated from the General Fund. The Department of Finance will make sure that each county receives at least \$250,000 and will compensate any county that does not receive this amount from the general fund.

Section 1995, part a, of SB 823 states that to be eligible for funding, each county needs to create a subcommittee of the JJCC that will be in charge of developing a JIRBG plan that describes facilities, programs, placements, and more for the youth that will be transferred home from the DJJ.

Part b details who the subcommittee should be composed of, including the chief probation officer, one representative each from the district attorney's office, the public defender's office, the department of social services, the department of mental health, the county office of education or a school district, a representative from the court and no fewer than three community members.

Part c of this section entails what should be present in each county's JIRBG plan to receive funding. This includes demographics of the realigned population, a description of the facilities, programs, placements, services, and more, as well as a description of how grant funds will be applied to address each of the following areas of need for realigned youth:

- A. Mental health, sex offender treatment, or related behavioral or trauma-based needs.
- B. Support programs or services that promote healthy adolescent development.
- C. Family engagement in programs.
- D. Reentry, including planning and linkages to support employment, housing, and continuing education.

- E. Evidence-based, promising, trauma-informed, and culturally responsive.
- F. Whether and how the plan will include services or programs for realigned youth that are provided by nongovernmental or community-based providers.

The intent written out above in A-F was also used in mycross examination and analysis of the JJRBG plans and expert interviews. I additionally used the other parts of Section 1995 that demonstrate the intent and goals of SB 823 grant funding, detailed above.

The plans were required to contain a detailed facility plan, including information on how facilities will ensure the safety and protection of youth of different ages, genders, special needs, and other relevant characteristics. The plans also must describe how they will reduce recidivism, how the block grant will support regional agreements, how data will be collected, and outcomes for youth served by the block grant. This data should be used to determine the results of programs and interventions supported by block grant funds.

Allowing the counties to measure and collect data gives counties the freedom to continue using data collection they already had in place, which can be a benefit because no additional implementation is needed. However, a significant downside of not having a universal data collection program is that it is tough to measure “success” on a larger level, for example, to see if the bill was “successful” in all of California. Instead, researchers will have to analyze each county individually to determine success.

Currently, the DOJ collects data on the juvenile justice system through the Juvenile Court and Probation Statistical System (JCPSS), which is a statewide database of information collected from counties. Counties theoretically are supposed to submit data to JCPSS every month. However, there are multiple limitations to this database. The first problem is a discrepancy each year between the number of referrals to probation via the JCPSS and the number of juvenile

arrests reported by law enforcement agencies via the Monthly Arrest and Citation Register (MACR). The difference is due to different definitions and programs used by law enforcement agencies: probation departments report caseload information and law enforcement reports individual arrests, and the JCPSS counts only juveniles who have a final disposition reported to the DOJ.

Other problems with the JCPSS reporting system include the fact that multiple counties across California have not contributed data to the system in specific years, and Sierra County Probation does not participate in the data collection system at all. Additionally, the classification and labeling process of racial and ethnic group data is entirely subjective and commonly determined by self-identification.

Due to these limitations and the need for a more comprehensive data set on California's juvenile justice system, SB 823 required that the Department of Justice submit a plan for the replacement of the JCPSS with a modern database and reporting system (Section 15, Section 13015 added to the Penal Code). This plan was set to be submitted to the Assembly and Senate Budget Subcommittees on Public Safety and the Assembly and Senate Public Safety Committees by January 1, 2023. This plan is still in progress today but could allow for more effective universal data collection than what each county can and will do on its own. This new system must be standardized so that comprehensive and high-quality data is collected in each county. This new system needs to be clearly communicated so that each county defines and classifies data similarly.

The JJRBG plans were initially due to the Office of Youth and Community Restoration on January 1, 2022. The subcommittee can edit the plan each year, with a requirement to meet at least every third year. Any edits need to be submitted on May 1 of each year.

SB 823 also outlines the functions of the Office of Youth and Community Restoration (OYCR), which will not be a focus of this implementation analysis. This office has many functions, including reviewing and accepting JJRBG plans from counties and aiding in the transition from DJJ to local implementation. The OYCR is also the institution that will evaluate the efficacy of local programs and submit a report on their findings by July 1, 2025 to the Governor and legislature.

### C. Analysis of County Plans

To analyze the county plans, I conducted a deep dive into each plan and compared what I found to the Section 1, part e, and Section 1995, part c stated intent of SB 823. This process is further outlined in my methodology section. The following sections will describe what I found in this analysis.

#### *San Diego County*

When comparing San Diego County's JJRBG plan to the SB 823 intent, the county was able to meet 4 out of 6 goals from Section 1 part e and 6 out of 6 goals of Section 1995, part c. To improve outcomes of youth and public safety, San Diego planned to send DJJ youth to the Youth Development Academy (YDA), located at East Mesa Juvenile Detention Facility, and use a clinical model launched in 2021 known as "HOPE," which stands for Healing Opportunities for Personal Empowerment. This program includes intensive clinical services and restorative circles to resolve conflict, address harm to the victim, and more. Not only does San Diego mention restorative justice practices as a goal in the initial sections of their plan, but they also back these practices up with research throughout their plan.

The HOPE program and practices like the multidisciplinary team (MDT) approach were established to develop Individual Rehabilitation Plans for youth. These plans are developed

within the first 30 days the youth is admitted and help identify obstacles, supports, and create an individualized plan for success. This plan development involves the justice-involved youth and a team including their family, representatives of behavioral health, education, ancillary treatment providers, and probation. San Diego cited three research studies pointing to the evidence that family and community involvement in youth rehabilitation decreases depression, improves academic success, and reduces recidivism.

San Diego also extended the definition of “family” to include extended family and non-biological relatives and included extended visitation hours and days. From 2017 to 2021, the percentage of youth in custody who received at least one visit per month increased from 53% to 79%. The inclusion of this data in the JJRBG plan demonstrates San Diego’s dedication to record keeping and internal analysis of what programs are effective. These initiatives satisfy the SB 823 goals of increasing family engagement in programs, attempting to reduce youth transfer into the adult criminal justice system, making mental health services available, and aiding reentry.

San Diego County’s plan is also clearly evidence-based, promising, trauma-informed, and culturally responsive, another SB 823 intent. Beyond the initiatives listed above, they also use six different screening tools, including cognitive behavioral therapy, an evidence-based practice. San Diego also collaborated with San Diego Association of Governments (SANDAG) to research the characteristics of youth committed to DJJ and recently released. In January 2021, SANDAG completed this study: "Preparation for the Realignment of Department of Juvenile Justice Youth: A Study of the Population, Best Practices for Rehabilitation, and Evidence-Based Recommendations." The subcommittee used outside academic research as well as prior SANDAG Research entitled “Seeking Alternatives: Understanding the Pathways to Incarceration

of High-Risk Juvenile Offenders” (SANDAG, 2015) in order to understand the incoming population and better prepare to meet their needs.

One of the most expansive sections of the JJRBG plan for San Diego County was the section on reducing and then eliminating racial and ethnic disparities, as stated in the Section 1, part c SB 823 intent. San Diego clearly states they seek to reduce racial and ethnic disparities. The Reducing Racial and Ethnic Disparities (RRED) Committee in San Diego is a partnership between the County’s Public Safety Group, Probation Department, District Attorney, Public Defender, Health and Human Services Agency (HHS), partners in the Juvenile Court, SDCOE, and The Children’s Initiative. They have come up with six efforts to reduce the entry of youth of color into the juvenile justice system, reduce the disparate treatment of youth of color, and reduce their recidivism and transfer into adult court. These six efforts are best practices that depend on the research and expertise of the RRED committee. These efforts include:

- Application of a Dispositional Matrix to structure decision-making for determining dispositions and use of detention;
- Using a validated risk assessment tool to inform supervision decisions;
- Engaging the family and community;
- Training staff on diversity/inclusion and implicit bias;
- Hiring staff who reflect the communities we serve; and
- Monitoring data and conducting research to identify disparities and initiate changes in policies and procedures to reduce disparities.

San Diego directly addresses the issues it sees with both disparate treatment of youth of color and a disproportionate number of youths of color entering the criminal justice system and

not being able to get out. San Diego also has a comprehensive list of support programs and services that promote healthy adolescent development.

There is evidence in the plans that San Diego tries to ensure that dispositions were in the least restrictive appropriate environment, one of the SB 823 intents. However, this is one of the areas that seemed to be lacking in evidence and is later identified in interviews as an obstacle. Nevertheless, it is stated in the plans that facility improvements were being considered, including better mattresses, more art and murals, a new athletic field, painting walls, purchasing “homelike” furniture and area rugs, resurfacing, or replacing sleeping room doors, removing upper bunks, and extending utilities to the quad area for a career technical education portable building. These improvements were all attempts to make the environment less restrictive.

San Diego also describes what measures will be used to determine the results of the programs they are implementing that will be supported by block grants, which also describes their data collection system. They will be assessing measures such as improvement in assessed risk to recidivate, recidivism rates, adherence to the therapeutic model, success of reentry, track success three years post-release, and more. Race and ethnicity were listed as factors that would also be tracked with this data.

The areas where San Diego falls short of the SB 823 intent are in attempting to reduce the use of confinement in the juvenile justice system by utilizing community-based responses and interventions and in attempting to make sure youth are in the least restrictive appropriate environment. Both counties struggled with meeting these intents, which will be discussed later on. There is no evidence that San Diego attempted to reduce confinement with community-based responses and interventions.

*Orange County*

When comparing Orange County's JJRBG plan to the SB 823 intent, they were able to meet 3 out of 6 goals from the Section 1 part e intent section and 6 out of 6 of the goals in Section 1995, part c. Improving youth outcomes and safety was one of those successes. OC Cares is a recidivism-reduction strategy launched in 2019 that the Board of Supervisors created, every County department working in juvenile Justice, the OC Superior Courts, and community-based organizations (CBO's). This strategy already being used fits into SB 823 and did not need to be changed. This strategy also theoretically aims to reduce recidivism and the transfer of youth into the adult criminal justice system; however, there is not enough evidence to tell whether this program is effective, and no research was cited to suggest that this would happen.

Similarly, when searching for evidence of how their plan would reduce the transfer of youth into the adult criminal justice system, there was no evidence or research cited. Instead, OC relied on its past plan, OC Cares, without making any evident changes. There was no research cited throughout the Orange County block grant plan; although there could have been research done behind the scenes, none was formally noted. However, the plan Orange County uses for reducing recidivism and ensuring a good transition into society post-confinement is similar to that of San Diego County. OC uses case conference meetings within 10 days of youth's entry into a juvenile facility, with families, CBOs, probation, health care agency, and Department of Education representatives to devise a robust case plan to identify needs, goals, barriers, and more. Additionally, OC plans to expand its service providers who "specialize in juvenile recidivism reduction". Like San Diego, Orange County also expanded the definition of "family" to include extended family and non-biological relatives.

Orange County was able to list both the mental health, sex offender treatment, or related behavioral or trauma-based needs they would offer, such as Cognitive Behavioral Therapy, and

provide a list of support programs or services that promote healthy adolescent development. Both of these meet the SB 823 intent. The programs and practices that Orange County uses seem to be evidence-based, trauma-informed, and promising, although they use fewer screening tools than San Diego, and do not cite any specific research they used to build this plan. It seems as though Orange County mainly relied on the subcommittee's expertise and their already existing plans.

Regarding reentry, including planning and linkages to support employment, housing, and continuing education, Orange County again built off an existing re-entry model utilized by the county's Youth Development Court. This model centralizes around case planning, involving the youth's community, and helps youth plan for re-entry, including housing, basic needs, employment, education, counseling, and other factors. The plan also lists that "culturally appropriate services" will be included but falls short of listing what these services might be and how implementation would look.

Orange County describes an update to its data system, including tracking data such as education attainment, employment, behavioral health, housing, family connections, foster care, and more. Currently, the probation department only tracks recidivism, risk assessments, number of arrests, and sustained petitions. Orange County does not describe specific outcome measures that can be utilized to determine the results of the programs and interventions supported by block grant funds, as specified in SB 823.

The facility improvements reported by Orange County will be a new body scan machine and a renovated wall around their facility. Neither of these improvements will ensure that youth are in the least restrictive appropriate environment. However, the other facility improvements mentioned discussed ensuring that health experts were close to patients who needed them most, and a "brighter, friendlier environment ... more conducive to treatment and learning." They also

discussed specialized housing based on gender, identity, age, behavioral needs, offense, and severity of offense, and creating a more “homelike” environment. This suggests that youth will be placed in less restrictive environments depending on their identity and needs but does not provide a specific plan. OC also discusses how they have a flexible housing strategy that will allow them to separate higher-risk youth and female or younger individuals based on their needs, maturity, and program appropriateness. There is conflicting evidence as to whether OC meets the desired intent of SB 823.

Sections where Orange County struggles with fully meeting the intent in their JJRBG plan include the attempt to reduce and then eliminate racial and ethnic disparities, reduce the use of confinement, and make sure youth are in the least restrictive environment. Orange County does not demonstrate any plan to reduce and then eliminate racial and ethnic disparities. The only information listed in the plan is that probation officers are “diverse,” probation officers will receive 32 hours of training each per year, and strategies will be “culturally appropriate.” Three of the sixteen training courses listed addressed racial disparities, implicit bias training, racial profiling training, and cultural diversity training. However, no clear plan exists to address or limit racial and ethnic disparities beyond the required limited hours of training. Additionally, there is no evidence within the plan that Orange County has plans to reduce the use of confinement in the juvenile justice system by utilizing community-based responses and interventions.

### *Comparison*

#### *KEY:*

Green: Significant evidence found that intent was met.

Yellow: Little or some evidence found that intent was met, and some obstacles.

Red: No evidence found that intent was met and major obstacles found.

<b>SB 823 Section 1 Intent</b>	<b>Orange</b>	<b>San Diego</b>
Improve the outcomes of youth and public safety	Green	Green
Reduce the transfer of youth into the adult criminal justice system	Green	Green
Ensure that dispositions are in the least restrictive appropriate environment	Yellow	Yellow
Reduce and then eliminate racial and ethnic disparities	Red	Green
Reduce the use of confinement in the juvenile justice system by utilizing community-based responses and interventions	Yellow	Yellow

<b>JJRBG Intent</b>	<b>Orange</b>	<b>San Diego</b>
Mental health, sex offender treatment, or related behavioral or trauma-based needs.	Green	Green
Support programs or services that promote the healthy adolescent development.	Green	Green
Family engagement in programs.	Green	Green
Reentry, including planning and linkages to support employment, housing, and continuing education.	Green	Green
Evidence-based, promising, trauma-informed, and culturally responsive.	Yellow	Green

Whether and how the plan will include services or programs for realigned youth that are provided by nongovernmental or community-based providers.		
Describe outcome measures that will be utilized to determine the results of the programs and interventions supported by block grant funds: (WIC 1995 (7))		

Orange County and San Diego County were able to both provide evidence to meet the following three out of six broad intents of SB 823, either due to programs and practices already existing in their county or due to diligent planning: describing demographics, reducing the transfer of youth into the adult criminal justice system, and improving the outcomes of youth and public safety. They were also able to meet all of the requirements for the block grant money: mental health, sex offender treatment, or related behavioral or trauma-based needs, support programs or services that promote healthy adolescent development, family engagement in programs, reentry, evidence-based, promising, trauma-informed, and culturally responsive, including planning and linkages to support employment, housing, and continuing education, and the extent to which nongovernmental and community-based providers would be offering services. Their ability to meet the intent of SB 823 in these areas is detailed in the section above.

On paper, the counties seem to be meeting much of the SB 823 stated intent. It is difficult to find major obstacles to implementation exclusively from these reports, because in the pursuit of funding, counties seemed to attempt to follow the intention more closely. The interviews in the next section paint a clearer picture of some of the obstacles faced in implementation.

SB 823 was broad in many sections of its intent so counties could fit their pre-existing strategies and programs more easily into this new legislation. This worked to their benefit, as

many of the services could be adequately provided to the returning DJJ youth quickly. This also allowed for county plans to provide specialized services based on their unique juvenile justice population. This is true for San Diego and Orange County as they continue to use their HOPE and OC Cares programs in conjunction with SB 823. However, the areas detailed below clearly suffered from this broad language, leading to some negative variation in the policy implementation when comparing Orange County to San Diego.

Although OC technically provided evidence to show that they were working towards a reduction of transfer of youth into the adult criminal justice system, there was still a lack of research on this topic. Orange County relies on previously implemented plans, specifically OC Cares from 2019, in order to reduce recidivism. They do not use any cited research within their plan, and they do not provide any evidence that their 2019 program reduces recidivism. Due to the lack of research, it cannot be determined whether Orange County's plan will reduce recidivism. To determine this outcome, they need to improve their data collection system and implement program evaluation research.

Compared with Orange County, San Diego cited multiple sources throughout their plan, showing that their ideas to reduce recidivism were backed by research. San Diego even had a study done by SANDAG on the San Diego juvenile justice demographic that helped them formulate their plan. The difference between the two counties is quite significant when it comes to the amount of research enacted, used, and cited. Although Orange County does not provide research as evidence for its plan, it could potentially be effective. However, it was not clearly communicated how or why it would be effective, and how Orange County would determine if it was effective.

The three out of six goals that either Orange County or San Diego County were lacking from Section 1, 823 include reducing and then eliminating racial and ethnic disparities, ensuring that youth are in the least restrictive appropriate environment, and reducing the use of confinement in the juvenile justice system by utilizing community-based responses and interventions. Additionally, when it comes to the JJR block grant intent, there were differences in the data collection process selected and the research and evidence-based promising practices both counties used for the development of their plans.

First, within the intent of “ensuring that dispositions are in the least restrictive appropriate environment,” Orange County failed to discuss this idea throughout its plan and instead discussed using grant money for facility improvements that have to do with increasing security and restrictiveness. San Diego discussed various facility improvements they hoped would make the facility more “homelike, trauma-informed, developmentally appropriate, and livable for longer commitments.”

When it comes to “reducing and then eliminating racial and ethnic disparities,” Orange County again falls short of mentioning a plan to conduct this beyond ensuring in-custody goals are “culturally appropriate.” Both counties listed the training their probation officers receive, which included training on implicit bias, racial profiling, and cultural diversity. San Diego County provides a clear plan for reducing racial disparities and has a specific committee assigned to address these issues. This plan is described above, but it is helpful to highlight the parts of the plan that Orange County does not include in their plan:

- *Application of a Dispositional Matrix to structure decision-making for determining dispositions and use of detention;*
- *Using a validated risk assessment tool to inform supervision decisions;*

- Engaging the family and community;
- Training staff on diversity/inclusion and implicit bias;
- Hiring staff who reflect the communities we serve; and
- *Monitoring data and conducting research to identify disparities and initiate changes in policies and procedures to reduce disparities.*

Out of the 6 best practices implemented by San Diego to specifically reduce racial and ethnic disparities in the juvenile criminal justice system, the three bullet points in italicized red are not discussed in Orange County's JJRBG plan. The other bullet points are discussed by Orange County's plan, but they are not discussed in the context of reducing racial disparities. According to the JJRBG plans, San Diego County clearly puts a greater emphasis within their plan and their county initiatives on reducing ethnic and racial disparities.

The final Section 1, part e intent where San Diego and Orange counties both fall short is "reduce the use of confinement in the juvenile justice system by utilizing community-based responses and interventions." There is no evidence in either JJRBG plan that either county considered this intent or was planning to implement practices to meet this goal. This could be because this intent out of all six intents was not already implemented in either county, and would have taken a lot more time and planning to execute.

It is evident based on my analysis of these plans that the JJRBG stated intent in Section 1995, counties more closely followed part c than the overarching Section 1, part e larger intents such as "reduce and then eliminate ethnic and racial disparities." It is also apparent that some of the stated goals, such as "reduce the use of confinement in the juvenile justice system by utilizing community-based responses and interventions" do not seem to be something that was

already implemented in either county or therefore was neglected. It was also too much of a broad statement that could be interpreted in many different ways.

#### D. Analysis of Interviews

##### *Orange County*

The interview with a member of Orange County's subcommittee was insightful for understanding the on-the-ground implementation, as well as learning about past restorative justice programs implemented in Orange County and research the subcommittee used for developing their plan. Orange County implemented restorative justice practices implemented in 2009 when Orange County probation partnered with the Casey Foundation's Juvenile Detention Alternatives Initiative (JDAI). This initiative assisted with implementing restorative justice practices and alternative to detention practices. This initiative also has a goal of combating racial and ethnic disparities. This initiative was not mentioned at all within the JJRBG plan for Orange County, but it does seem to suggest that Orange County has experience with the Section 1, part e intents of reducing racial disparities and looking into alternative detention practices. The Orange County interviewee also explained that many of their community-based organization (CBO) partnerships enact many restorative justice practices in schools and probation programs. They also discussed how more interventions are being conducted in the community rather than the institution, which would support the intent of reducing confinement using CBO's interventions.

The main obstacles faced by the Orange County subcommittee was the high time commitment, along with specific probation policies and procedures, especially when it came to writing Request for Proposal's (RFP) and selecting vendors to implement certain parts of the Orange County plan. The interviewee conveyed that probation's clearance process was very stringent and that applicants could not pass their policies. This delays implementing "many of

the identified services” by the subcommittee. The interviewee suggests changing these policies in order to move implementation along.

Another main obstacle was the lack of a robust research department from the probation department. The interviewee discussed this obstacle when I asked the question, “How much of a factor in your JJCC subcommittee’s research and planning process were racial and ethnic disparities for youth in your county?” There was a lack of research capacity identified, which the interviewee hopes will be remedied with SB 823 funding which can go to tracking racial and ethnic disparities along with the outcomes of justice-involved youth. The answer communicates that racial and ethnic disparities were not heavily considered due to the lack of data surrounding this topic.

The strengths of SB 823 identified by the Orange County interview data was that it has strengthened community partnerships with local government. They also communicated that the subcommittee is ensuring policies at the county are standardized and programming is focused on evidence-based practices (EBP), restorative justice practices, and directed towards the communities most impacted. This was mentioned in the Orange County plan as well, and CBOs were listed to provide “restorative circles,” among other services. Additionally, the subcommittee’s knowledge was stated to be comprehensive.

### *San Diego County*

Three different subcommittee members from San Diego County were interviewed; each member had very different areas of expertise. One was a part of the education department, another worked with behavioral health services, and another served as an advocate for justice-involved youth and a community member.

San Diego County, similarly to Orange County, has been using restorative justice practices for many years now. San Diego uses the Youth in Custody Practice Model Initiative, which bridges the gap between research and practice and focuses on case planning, facility-based services, transition/re-entry, and community-based practices. The Children's Initiative also had a prominent role in these meetings, bridging the gap between health practitioners, educators, probation officers, and community members. The Children's Initiative ensured that restorative justice was at the forefront of developing the JJRBG plan. The interviewees agreed that this legislation was seamless because many committees have already been meeting regularly to discuss these programs for youth who are already in San Diego, and so the research and discussions in these meetings were able to be used in the development of a plan for the returning DJJ youth. Additionally, San Diego had already somewhat adopted a restorative lens before this legislation. Interviewees noted that the legislation pushed restorative justice practices to the forefront.

A major challenge all three interviewees discussed was the facility's infrastructure. The East Mesa Juvenile Hall was determined to be too restrictive for what the subcommittee had wished for; it was built like a prison, but the committee wanted it to feel more like an urban camp facility. There were also many programs and services the subcommittee wanted to implement that might not fit into the space, so they had to find a way to make them fit. The interviewees say that although this was a major challenge, they felt they had overcome it. One interviewee stated that recently, there was a fall festival at the East Mesa Juvenile Hall and that it was a great success in making the environment feel more open and allowing the youth to grow. Another interviewee discussed working with partners to make the space "more reflective of the

student population, more social, emotional.” Examples of this initiative included murals painted in the space, signage, and updated furniture.

Another challenge was the size of each population; an example given was the number of women. The committee wanted services for each population, but there were very few women, so it was challenging to figure out how to provide these services for such a small population.

Another obstacle was making sure the youth could continue participating in programs and have access to services they had at the DOJ. Another challenge was the size of San Diego and how many players had to be involved in the planning. The Children’s Initiative was again mentioned as a great leader and united front that aided the committee in guiding the process and moving forward.

San Diego also wanted to focus not only on strengthening the transition out of incarceration but also giving the youth opportunities and services that they received within the juvenile justice system once they transition out of it. When youth receive more services within juvenile detention, they may re-offend in order to have access to these services again, which is something that needed to be addressed. Services must be available to these youth once they are released. Funding was listed as an issue, as it is “always an issue,” but it ended up not being as big of an issue as initially anticipated. The interviewees all seemed confident in the plan they had created and discussed the obstacles as things they had been able to overcome.

When asked about using evidence-based and promising practices, it was discussed how SB 823 kept the momentum going in SD when it came to research. Interviewees describe the transition with SB 823 as easier than it might have been with some other counties because San Diego County was already focusing on evidence-based and restorative practices. Additionally, having people on the subcommittee with lived experience within the San Diego Juvenile Justice

system was extremely helpful in getting the inside perspective of San Diego's Juvenile Detention centers. Other evidence-based and promising practices mentioned were cognitive behavioral therapy, behavioral health best practices, youth in custody practice model best practices, SANDAG research, and YTC research on trauma-informed care.

San Diego County subcommittee interviewees said that racial and ethnic disparities were also already being discussed in San Diego for many years and these considerations are infused into their existing systems. The Racial and Ethnic Disparities Committee (RRED) provided best practices for their plan. Additionally, the interviewees said data was useful in determining what specific needs there would be. They made sure that not only were material and structural strains culturally and linguistically responsive, but also basic needs, such as hair products, hygiene, and food. The committee said they are aware of disparities and are prepared to address them. One interviewee said that although these conversations around disparities are happening at the top and that this was a positive thing, is still something that needs to be assessed throughout the entire system.

An overall positive effect of SB 823 that was mentioned was the collaboration of all partners within the juvenile justice system. The mandatory JJRBG plan creation forced everyone to work together, with the Children's Initiative helping to guide the discussion, which was described as important and helpful for the subcommittee members.

### *Intent*

The interviews from San Diego County and Orange County gave insight into obstacles each county faced and what they thought they excelled at within the planning process. They also provided insight into the JJRBG plans and how they compared with the SB 823 intent. In Section 1, part e, they gave insight into reducing and eliminating racial disparities, ensuring dispositions

were in the least restrictive environment, and reducing the use of confinement. San Diego County discussed limitations with the facility infrastructure, as it is a very restrictive environment. However, they also discussed their plans to overcome this obstacle and seemed to plan for it well.

Orange County lacks research in the probation department, which prohibited the subcommittee from discussing and identifying racial and ethnic disparities and working against them in an active strategy. There are plans to use SB 823 to expand the tracking capacity of the probation department, but the interviewee or JJRBG plan did not lay out specific plans. This lack of specificity could potentially lead to this section being neglected. San Diego County has the RRED committee's best practices implemented and discussed. It will continue to evaluate racial and ethnic disparities and work to combat them, according to the subcommittee interviews and JJRBG plan.

Although reducing confinement in the juvenile justice system by utilizing community-based responses and interventions was not explicitly mentioned in either JJRBG plan, it was mentioned in the interviews from both counties. These initiatives are clearly taken on by community-based organizations separately from the government but seem to exist in both counties and therefore do not need to be specifically addressed in the plans. This intent of the policy is also very different from the other intentions and is more about the home population of San Diego and Orange counties rather than the returning DJJ youth.

In Section 1995, part c, the interviews gave insight into whether their plans and practices were “evidence-based, promising, trauma-informed, and culturally responsive.” Orange County had no formal research done when developing the plan but did rely on previous research done and adopted. Additionally, it was stated that research would be a “priority when funding

programs.” For San Diego County, specific research was done in developing this plan by SANDAG, along with reliance on past research and programs. San Diego cited significantly more research in their JJRBG plans, and discussed more research in the interviews. Orange County did not formally cite any research or discuss any research in the interview beyond what had already been implemented in Orange County.

#### E. Summary of Findings

##### *County-specific obstacles*

The county-specific obstacles became evident while conducting interviews and analyzing the JJRBG plans. The biggest obstacle for Orange County was the probation department's stringent policies, which halted collaboration with community-based organizations (CBOs) and delayed the implementation process. Orange County also had other obstacles pertaining to the probation department, specifically the lack of a robust research department that could identify racial and ethnic disparities and track outcomes to determine whether their programs were successful.

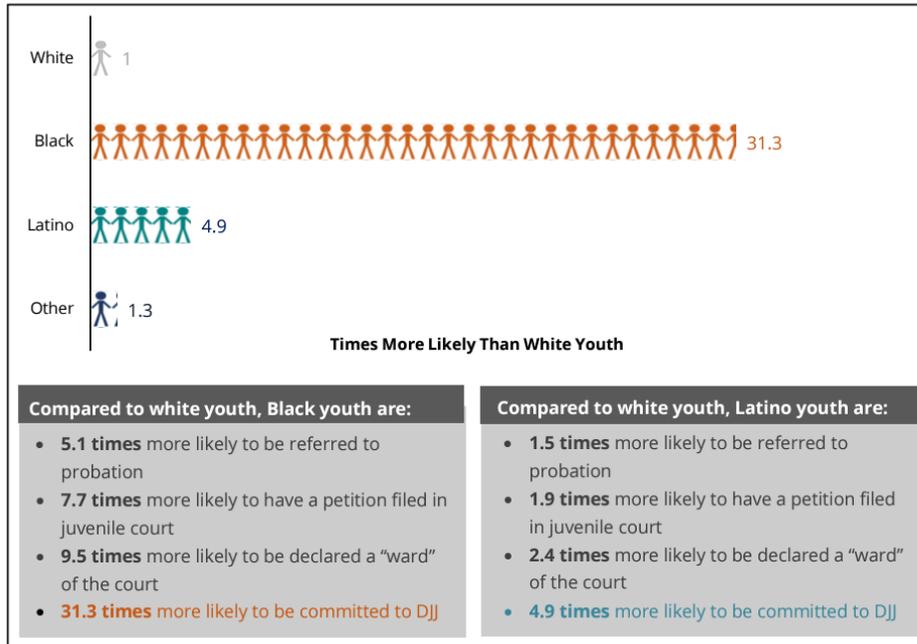
The biggest obstacle for San Diego County was the limited infrastructure. The facility that was available to house the DJJ youth was the East Mesa Juvenile Detention Facility, which was more restrictive than the committee wanted. The subcommittee wanted a facility that was similar to a camp or college campus environment instead of a prison. The lack of infrastructure limited the practices and services they could offer. Another challenge was the goal of providing specialized care for each demographic but only having a small number of specific demographics. An example given was women; very few women returned from the DJJ, but San Diego County still needed to ensure they had appropriate services for these women.

##### *Implementation Barriers Overall*

Both San Diego and Orange counties need to catch up in various areas of their plans and have multiple obstacles that prevent them from implementing their plan to its fullest extent. This is partly due to a lack of clear parameters for success within the bill. For each intent listed in Section 1 and 1995, there are no smaller goals or steps the counties could take to move towards that intent. The state's lack of guidance was so counties could come up with these goals themselves, depending on their county's needs. However, this did not happen, and certain intentions fell through the cracks, as we saw with the reduction of racial and ethnic disparities in Orange County, which was not addressed within their plan, and was also lacking in subcommittee planning meeting conversations. More research is needed to go into the development of this bill, along with top-down specific goals that would guide counties toward success while still giving them the freedom to work with what their counties already had.

The lack of data in Orange County's probation department caused the subcommittee to be unable to address racial and ethnic disparities and did not provide faith in their 2019 OC Cares plan to reduce recidivism, which is still in place today. Addressing racial and ethnic disparities is so important because the California DJJ population in 2020 was disproportionately Latino (59.3%) and Black (29.0%) (Ridolfi, et. al., 2020). Only 7.7% of DJJ youth were white. This racial difference in commitment needs to be addressed, which is why the state of California included the intent of reducing and eliminating racial and ethnic disparities within SB 823.

Figure 2. Likelihood of DJJ Commitment, by Race (2019)



Source: DOJ, 2020.

Robust data collection is needed to determine whether their planned services and programs are successful and how they might need to be changed. The state of California is in the process of standardizing a new data collection system, but for now, it has left the data collection to the counties. This data collection system was presented to the California legislature in January of 2023, meaning that the implementation of a new system will still be many years out. This data collection system should have been designed far before 2023 and implemented in the counties by the time the DJJ youth returned to their home counties. The lack of standardized data collection across counties will make it difficult for the state to determine whether this bill was successful and how it was successful.

The bill was implemented too quickly, potentially leading to a lack of programming and services for youth. On July 1, 2021, the DJJ was no longer intaking new youth, so any youth that previously would be sent to the DJJ stayed in their home counties. The JRBG plans were initially due in January of 2022, and the DJJ closed in June of 2023, just one year after the plans

were submitted. Regarding local government processes, it can take over a year just for a CBO to be awarded a contract, let alone hire staff and get programs off the ground. Additionally, counties did not immediately receive grant money, but were instead waiting for their plans to be approved. This further delayed the process. Orange County discussed their probation department as having stringent policies which further delayed the implementation of programs and services for these youth. The implementation period was not long enough, creating situations where counties were not ready to house youth and provide them with all the programs they needed on time. The subcommittee interviews from San Diego did not mention the timing issue, but Chief Probation Officer Nelson was quoted in the *San Diego Union-Tribune* in 2023 saying “A lot of the things that we have to do, we’re unable to do until we receive money from the state” (Figueroa, 2023).

Neither San Diego nor Orange counties mentioned reducing confinement, and both counties struggled to ensure that youth were placed in the “least restrictive environment appropriate.” San Diego County had to use the East Mesa Juvenile Detention center instead of a “youth camp” style less-restrictive environment due to space limitations and funding. Similarly, youth in Orange County went to the Orange Juvenile Detention Center rather than a youth camp. These counties struggled with meeting these goals without providing enough funding or guidance into what a “least restrictive” environment looks like and what “reducing confinement” could mean.

### *Areas of Success*

One of the most successful parts of SB 823 was the requirement of counties to have a subcommittee made up of specific players across local government departments and community members. Requiring all the major departments working with justice-involved youth to be

involved in developing this plan helped the counties unify their mission and services.

Additionally, the requirement of a publicly available plan keeps counties accountable to enforce the plans they developed.

This bill also increased local government collaboration with community-based organizations (CBOs) because this was needed in order to provide the new services. Multiple interviewees mentioned this new collaboration as a positive shift.

San Diego County successfully used research throughout their plan to back up their services and programs offered and collaborated with SANDAG to conduct even more research on the impacted population. This caliber of research is commendable and should be standardized in counties across California. Extensive research is necessary to build a plan like this, and for it to be effective, and it is important to not only rely on the expertise of the counties' subcommittee, but to use truly evidence-based practices throughout the plan.

The language of the bill gives counties freedom to determine how they would measure the results of the programs supported by block grant funds, allowing counties to determine what success looks like for their county. San Diego County detailed how SANDAG and the Probation Department would collect an extensive amount of data on the program, including improvement in assessed risk to recidivate, improvement in assessed needs over time, adherence to therapeutic model, success of re-entry, tracking recidivism, and reporting race and ethnicity within program outcomes. Orange County will collect data on the impact of the county plan on youth's rehabilitation, recidivism, and public safety. They say grant funds will be used to improve their collection of data. This subjective system will determine the success of each county on a case-by-case basis. What is success in one county might look different in another county.

Nonetheless, a common standardized measure of success would be beneficial to counties, and hopefully such a measure will be enacted within a new state data collection system.

The Section 1995 intent, which was necessary to address in order to receive funding, was followed a lot more closely, and explained more extensively how each county would enact it, than the Section 1, part e intent. This demonstrates that if funding is attached to a goal or intent, it is much more likely to be implemented because counties want that money. Both counties' plans look good on paper in this section. It is possible that these intentions were followed so closely because funding was attached; future implementation needs to be supervised closely to determine if these plans are truly working as intended. A *San Diego Union-Tribune* article in 2023 quoted Erin Palacios, an attorney with the Youth Law Center in the Bay Area, "I think if you were to look across the state you would find from the advocacy community a lot of people telling you that, on paper, many of these facilities appear to have programming and resources," Palacios said. "But in reality, that is not taking place" (Figueroa, 2023). This study shows that the programming and services required to receive funding did indeed exist on paper. However, the other services that were not attached to funding in Section 1 were neglected in certain areas in both San Diego and Orange counties.

## **Implications and Recommendations**

### **A. Recommendations for Policy and Practice of Implementation**

#### *State Level Recommendations*

Based on these findings, I made four overall policy observations and considerations for future state to local policy implementation. My recommendations are for the state to create more specific language and benchmarks for success for counties to follow, connect the intentions of the bill with funding as a means of accountability, create realistic timelines for implementation, and create standardized data collection processes before the bill is implemented, not after.

First, when the intentions and goals of legislation are too broad, this leads to wide variation in implementation, and can lead to intentions not being met or completely being disregarded. In state to local implementation, the language of the bill must be broad enough for all counties to implement, but also specific enough that the intent of the policy is followed, and that counties have clear parameters of success that they need to reach. I would suggest small changes, for example, instead of “reduce and eliminate racial disparities,” the goal should be more specific, such as “identify racial and ethnic disparities in your county and create a plan to reduce these disparities along with an outline of clear indicators of measurable success.” Another suggestion would be to create a standard for the caliber and amount of research and evidence-based and promising practices that are required in a county’s plan.

Second, when the intentions of a bill are required to be enacted by a county in order to receive funding, the county is more likely to follow them. Therefore, if the intention of a bill is truly a priority, it should be a requirement in order to receive any funding.

Third, when state to local implementation of a bill is rushed, counties struggle to meet the requirements of the bill, and the target population suffers as a result. Hasty implementation

without the time or funding to ensure all services and programs are provided leads to intentions of the SB 823 bill not being met and youth left without the services they need.

Finally, relying on a county's plan for implementation is not enough to determine success; there must be continuous observation and high-quality data must be provided along with reports from each county. Data collection processes should be standardized before a new policy is implemented to track success effectively.

SB 823's bill's intent was too ambitious and didn't give counties enough funding, guidance, or support to fully meet every section of intent. This was particularly evident in the sections of reducing and eliminating racial and ethnic disparities, reducing confinement practices, and ensuring youth are in the least restrictive appropriate environment.

#### *County-level recommendations*

In state to local implementation, counties should share best practices for implementation with each other, and collaborate in order to better implement the policy. Some counties clearly have more research or existing infrastructure which give them a leg up in implementation. This advantage could be shared through an online system of best practices for the state of California that other counties can use to create their own county plans.

## **VIII. Conclusion**

### **A. Summary of Findings**

Through document analysis, I concluded that San Diego County and Orange County both struggled to meet the intents of ensuring youth were kept in the least restrictive environment and reducing the use of confinement. Orange County also struggled with addressing the reduction of racial disparities, while San Diego County excelled at meeting this intent. Interviews gave further insight into why these intents were not met. San Diego County struggled with their limited infrastructure; the East Mesa Juvenile Detention Facility was more restrictive than they would have preferred. This facility also limited the programs and services they could offer. Orange County struggled with similar structural constraints. However, both counties attempted to make their prison facilities more “homelike” through various renovations. Due to lack of funding, the environment could not be made “less restrictive” than this.

Orange County also had other structural barriers within the probation department. The stringent policies of the probation department have halted collaboration with CBOs, which in turn has left youth without all the services that they need and that the plan requires they have. Reducing the use of confinement using CBOs was not discussed in either county’s JJRBG plan. However, it was discussed in interviews with both counties that these services are available and being enacted to a certain extent throughout their counties.

Orange County did not create a plan for reducing and eliminating racial disparities, while San Diego County had developed a full plan and a committee focused on formulating best practices for reducing racial disparities. Orange County’s probation department did not have an adequate research arm, leaving the subcommittee unprepared to tackle the intent of reducing racial and ethnic disparities. In contrast, San Diego County partnered with SANDAG and other

organizations to complete research on the juvenile justice population and cited this research and other academic literature throughout their plan. This level of research should be a standard for all of California counties and held as a best practice.

The overall identified barriers for both counties included a lack of guidance and parameters from the state, which led to varied interpretations of the intent, and confusion around to what extent each intent needed to be addressed. Additionally, the bill was implemented too quickly, which left youth without certain services.

Both counties were able to provide evidence that they were attempting to reach each intent of Section 1995, which was a condition for securing JJRBG funding. This is a positive outcome on paper, but the actual implementation still needs to be assessed in the coming years to determine if the plans are closely followed. This bill successfully increased local government collaboration with CBOs and required a JJCC subcommittee and plan to be formulated before implementation. The plan will be helpful not only for counties but also for researchers to determine how well implementation occurs.

#### B. Limitations of the Study

This study had several limitations. I was only able to obtain four interviews despite my many efforts to achieve more than this. My status as an undergraduate student may have undermined my ability to obtain interviews. I conducted three interviews for San Diego County and one for Orange County. This was comprehensive enough to complete my research, but still limited the scope of research.

As an undergraduate student, I was the sole researcher on my team, which limits the study in terms of aptitude and ability to conduct a large amount of research in a short amount of time. I was unable to rely on previous research on this bill and its implementation because the

implementation process is still underway. This limited my ability to compare data from more than two counties. I also had no funding to conduct my research, which would have expanded my reach and allowed me to have more time to analyze the data I collected.

Additionally, the duration of this project was about a year in length, and the implementation of SB 823 will not be completed until 2025. Due to time constraints and resources, I could only focus on the initial implementation of SB 823. In the future, a longitudinal study should be conducted on this policy, not only analyzing two counties but analyzing all the counties who implemented this policy in California.

### C. Future Research Directions

This research project on SB 823 should be the first of many, as this policy is groundbreaking in changing the way that California's juvenile justice system works. A longitudinal study of this policy and all the counties that enacted them should be conducted in the future. How well the counties in California were able to overcome the obstacles this policy creates and how well they were able to follow the intent of the policy.

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## Appendices

### A. IRB Approved Email and Consent Form

Hello x, Juvenile Justice Coordinating Council Subcommittee Member,

My name is Anna Griffin, and I am an undergraduate student in the International Studies department at Point Loma Nazarene University. I am working on a research project under the supervision of Dr. Nantkes.

I am writing to you today to invite you to participate in a study entitled “Implementation Analysis of SB 823”. This study aims to explore how the beginning stages of policy implementation of SB 823 has differed in two counties in Southern California, which are San Diego and Orange County. I am specifically focusing on how the JJCC 823 Subcommittee created the Juvenile Justice Realignment Plans for each county.

This study involves a 30-minute interview over zoom. With your consent, interviews will be audio and video recorded and stored in a password secured file. If you do not have the time to complete this interview, you can also answer the questions I have for the study over email. If you wish to respond over email, a consent form is required before the email interview. The timing of the interview will be entirely up to you, I can make any time that works for you work for me.

There are no more than minimal risks (what one would encounter in daily life) associated with this study, and you may leave the interview at any time. I will make a committed effort to maintain your confidentiality.

You will have the right to end your participation in the study at any time, for any reason. If you choose to withdraw, all the information you have provided will be destroyed.

All research data, including any audio and video recordings and notes will be password-protected. Any hard copies of data including any handwritten notes will be kept in a locked cabinet. Research data will only be accessible by the researcher and the research supervisor.

This research has been cleared by Point Loma Nazarene University Institutional Review Board (IRB).

If you would like to participate in this research project, or have any questions about the research, please contact me at this email address ([agriffin0020@pointloma.edu](mailto:agriffin0020@pointloma.edu)).

Sincerely,

Anna Joy Griffin

### **Informed Consent to Participate in Research**

**Introduction/Purpose** I understand that I am being invited to participate in a research study. HON4098-1 Honors Project 1 is sponsoring this study at Point Loma Nazarene University. The purpose of this research is to study how the beginning stage of policy implementation of a restorative justice model through Senate Bill 823 differed in two counties in Southern California.

**Procedures** I understand that the proposed length of my participation in this study consists of one 30-minute time slots per interview. During this time, I will answer a series of questions concerning the implementation stage of SB 823, specifically the creation of the JJRBG plan and my role in it. I understand that this interview will be audio and video recorded on Zoom and later transcribed later for data verification. Only the researcher and supervising professor will have access to these files. The recordings will be kept in a on the researcher's password-protected computer. The recordings can be deleted at the request of the participant following the end of the research process on June 1 st , 2024.

Risks I understand that there are no more than minimal risks (what one would encounter in daily life) associated with this study.

Benefits I understand that my participation will help the researcher understand more about the implementation of SB 823 in San Diego and Orange County. My participation can also potentially increase my own self-awareness and reflection on my participation in the JJCC subcommittee.

Voluntary Participation I understand that my participation is voluntary and that I may refuse or withdraw from the study at any time without penalty.

Confidentiality I understand that the data collected for this study and/or any identifying records will remain confidential and kept in a locked file and/or password-protected computer file in the researcher's office. I understand that all data collected will be coded with a number or pseudonym (fake name), that my name will not be used. I further understand that the results of this research project may be made public and information quoted in professional journals and meetings, but information from this study will only be reported as a group, and not individually.

Debriefing I understand that I have the right to have all questions about the study answered in sufficient detail for me to clearly understand the level of my participation as well as the significance of the research. I understand that at the completion of this study, I will have an opportunity to ask and have answered all questions pertaining to my involvement in this study by contacting Anna Griffin at [agriffin0020@pointloma.edu](mailto:agriffin0020@pointloma.edu) after the study is complete, around June 1st, 2024.

Receipt of informed consent: I acknowledge having received a copy of the consent form. I understand that I may call the investigators involved in the study, or supervising

professor, Dr. Nantkes, in order to discuss confidentially any questions about my participation in the study. Also, should I have any concerns about the nature of this study I can also contact the Chair of PLNU's IRB (IRB@pointloma.edu).

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

(I am 18 years old or older.)

#### Contact Information

Investigator(s):

Anna Griffin

agriffin0020@pointloma.edu

(626)755-3762

Supervising Professor:

Dr. Amy Nantkes

anantkes@pointloma.edu

(619) 849-2460

#### B. Elite Interview Questions

PERSONAL

What is your role with regard to the issue of juvenile justice in your community?

RESTORATIVE JUSTICE

Was there a central definition for “restorative justice” used in the JJCC subcommittee meetings, and in what way(s) was “restorative justice” central to the planning process?

In your opinion, were restorative justice practices prominent in your county’s juvenile justice system prior to the passage of SB 823? If not, how would you describe the juvenile justice system prior to the passage of the bill?

#### PLANNING AND IMPLEMENTATION

What was your JJCC subcommittee’s process in designing the juvenile justice realignment plan?

What obstacles did your JJCC subcommittee face in the planning process?

What implementation barriers did the JJCC subcommittee foresee, and how did you plan accordingly?

The legislation calls for an approach using “evidence-based and promising practices and programs” to be utilized in the formulation of the proposal. Did the JJCC subcommittee as a whole consult any research in order to inform the development of the plan?

If so, what studies or best practices did you find to be most helpful in your planning process?

#### CULTURALLY RESPONSIVE

How much of a factor in your JJCC subcommittee’s research and planning process were racial and ethnic disparities for youth in your county?

How did your JJCC subcommittee interpret what “culturally responsive” services mean in the context of the language of SB 823?

How will grant funds be applied to offer or improve these services?

Anything else you would like me to know about the process of planning and early implementation?

C. IRB Approval

**POINT**<sup>19</sup>  **LOMA**<sup>02</sup>  
**NAZARENE UNIVERSITY**

**Institutional Review Board**

November 13, 2023

Dear Anna,

Congratulations! Your research project, *Implementation Analysis of SB 823* (PLNU IRB ID# 18475), has been approved by the Institutional Review Board of Point Loma Nazarene University. What this means is that the PLNU IRB has determined that the proposed research and research plan, as they have been described to us, have been designed in accordance with the ethics guidelines for human subjects research set forth by the federal government of the United States of America in the Code of Federal Regulations Title 45 (Public Welfare), Part 46 (Protection of Human Subjects).

Your approval is valid for one year from today's date, after which time it will be considered closed. If you need to make non-trivial amendments to your current proposal at any time during the current approval period, please submit an amendment statement. If you wish to continue your research after one year has passed, please submit a continuation application.

Please keep this communication for your records. Best of luck with your research!



Holly Irwin, Ph.D.  
Institutional Review Board Chairperson  
Vice Provost for Academic Administration  
Point Loma Nazarene University