



Circleville
Juvenile
Correctional
Facility
Interim
Inspection

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SECTION I. INTERIM INSPECTION OVERVIEW

CIIC staff conducted an interim inspection of Circleville JCF on May 26, 2011. The primary focus of the interim inspection was to speak with youth regarding any concerns and to follow-up on sanitation issues noted in one of the close security housing units during CIIC's previous inspection of the facility on October 25, 2010.

SECTION II. KEY FINDINGS

A. Points of Pride

- **Youth input.** During the interim inspection CIIC observed part of a Youth Council meeting. Youth Council is a group of representative youth that meet monthly with staff, including the Superintendent, to relay any concerns and suggestions on behalf of each of their housing units. CJCF allows qualified youth on the Council (those with a record of good behavior) to run for officer positions, thus encouraging youth to take on leadership roles.

The observed meeting consisted of a productive, open dialogue between youth and staff—youth were asking questions and even if the answer to the question was “no,” staff took the time to explain the reasoning. Staff also encouraged youth on the council to speak with their peers to brainstorm creative, appropriate activities for next intersession. Staff relayed that they were open to youth ideas and wanted to gain their input because youth may come up with activities staff would not otherwise plan.

- **Youth compliments to staff.** Throughout the interim inspection multiple youth expressed their praise of Youth Specialist Markus Patterson. Youth nicknamed him “Uncle P” and said that he makes youth feel like they are a part of his family. Youth said he genuinely cares about them and that he is very helpful and involved. Administration echoed these sentiments and relayed that Youth Specialist Patterson has a very calming effect on youth that are upset.

Youth were also very complimentary of Unit Manager Aaron Jamieson. Youth stated that he is down to earth, he plans activities, and helps unify the unit. One youth said that Mr. Jamieson really “goes to bat” for youth and does not tolerate fighting on the unit.

- **Youth safety level.** In an effort to gauge the facility's level of safety for youth, all youth interviewed were asked to rate their perceived level of safety, with ten meaning the youth felt “very safe” and one meaning the youth felt “very unsafe.” **The average level of safety reported by youth was 7.3.** Although this is lower than at other DYS facilities, two-thirds of youth interviewed still rated their level of safety as an eight or higher, with one-third of youth rating their level of safety as a ten.

One youth rated his safety level as a one, but explained that this was not due to personal safety concerns, but due to the age of the facility. A small number of youth rated their safety as a four or five and gave the following reasons: (1) there is too much youth

fighting; (2) assaults happen (not to him directly); (3) because it is a close security facility and anything can happen; and (4) because a youth interviewed was assaulted in the past for refusing to join a gang.

B. CIIC Concerns

- **Youth perception of Cognitive Behavioral Therapy (CBT).** A majority of youth interviewed either disliked the CBT programming, felt it was not beneficial, or felt that it was not going to change their behavior. A few youth stated that staff simply go through the motions and read the material, but do not add anything new or relatable to the lessons. Youth made the following remarks regarding CBT: (1) “it is common sense and a waste of time;” (2) “it is useless and it is kid’s stuff that doesn’t help;” (3) “it doesn’t help me;” (4) “it is simple and boring;” (5) “it’s good, but it is not going to change anyone;” (6) “staff don’t add anything new;” (7) “I hate it;” and (8) one youth even said it will not change him and he will continue to sell drugs upon release.
- **Security Threat Group (STG) activity at the facility.** Multiple youth interviewed during the inspection stated that gangs are an issue at the facility. As stated above, one youth relayed that he was “clapped” (assaulted) for refusing to join a gang. Other youth complained that they are being “taxed,” meaning a youth’s property is taken by a gang-affiliated youth. A different youth said that there is gang violence at the facility and gang-related fights, although less than at Ohio River Valley JCF. When asking one youth what changes he would make at the facility, the youth stated that he would tell staff not to tolerate gang activity and he would stop youth from being “taxed.”
- **Youth would like more activities, recreation, and longer visitations.** Many youth shared that they would like more activities and recreation offered at the facility. Youth stated that if more activities were provided then youth would be busy and less prone to creating problems. Many youth also said they would like visitations with their family members to be extended, especially for youth whose families travel long distances and cannot visit frequently. Youth also requested extra phone calls with family.

C. CIIC Recommendation

- CIIC encourages Circleville JCF to evaluate and adopt the gang prevention initiatives and multistep approach used at Indian River JCF’s for youth engaging in gang-related activities and acts of violence. The approach used at Indian River JCF involves education and gang prevention at reception, holding youth accountable for gang-related incidents by contacting parents and the youth’s committing judge, as well as three sets of curriculum for youth involved in gang-related acts of violence.

SECTION III. FOLLOW-UP TO CIIC BIENNIAL INSPECTION (OCTOBER 25, 2010)

A. Sanitation concerns on Maple Unit

During CIIC's previous biennial inspection of Circleville JCF (October 25, 2010), there were several sanitation issues noted in the Maple Unit. At the time of the inspection, Maple was a close security unit housing the facility's most disruptive youth. The unit's day room was in disarray, one youth room was destroyed with garbage everywhere, and the unit's seclusion room was unsanitary. The Maple Unit is now a reception unit that also houses graduate youth. All sanitation issues noted during the previous inspection were remedied. Staff relayed that most disruptive youth are presently housed in the Ash Unit. Upon inspection of Ash, there were no significant sanitation issues.