

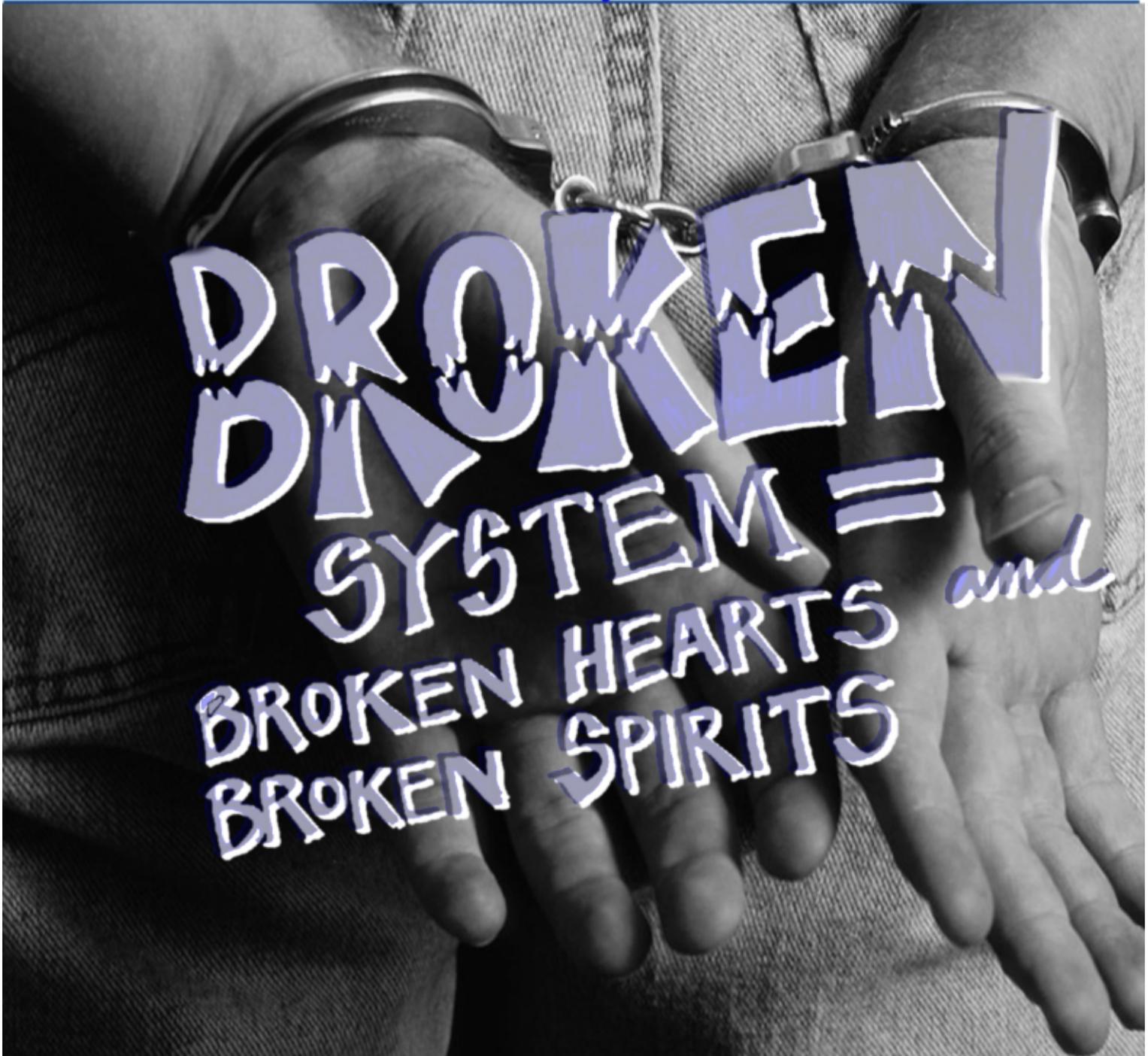
really

what's up doc?: A Call for Reform of the Office of Juvenile Justice



by Families and Friends of Louisiana's Incarcerated Children
& Juvenile Justice Project of Louisiana

**DROKEN
DROKEN
SYSTEM =
BROKEN HEARTS and
BROKEN SPIRITS**



Really What's[^]Up Doc?

A Call for Reform of the Office of Juvenile Justice

MAY 2012

A Report by
Families and Friends of Louisiana's Incarcerated Children
&
Juvenile Justice Project of Louisiana



Acknowledgments

Families and Friends of Louisiana's Incarcerated Children and Juvenile Justice Project of Louisiana would like to acknowledge and thank previously and currently incarcerated youth, their families and advocates who contributed to our work by sharing information, stories, data, and research about the topics discussed in the report. This report would not have been possible without their support and dedication to reforming the Office of Juvenile Justice.

Letter to the Governor

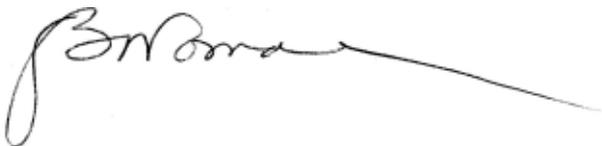
May 17, 2012

Dear Governor Jindal:

On behalf of the Juvenile Justice Project of Louisiana and Families and Friends of Louisiana's Incarcerated Children, we are pleased to present to you our report, *What's Really Up Doc?: A Call for Reform of the Office of Juvenile Justice*. This report is a culmination of years of experience and advocacy during your administration as well as during the tenure of Dr. Mary Livers as Deputy Secretary of the Office of Juvenile Justice. The recommendations we offer are based on best-practices models and our dedication to transforming the juvenile justice system into one that builds on the strengths of young people, families and communities to ensure Louisiana's children are given the greatest opportunities to grow and thrive.

We are grateful for the opportunity to present our findings on this urgent issue. We hope that this report will be an integral tool in driving Louisiana's juvenile justice reform efforts.

Sincerely,



Gina Womack
Executive Director
Families and Friends of Louisiana's Incarcerated Children



Dana Kaplan,
Executive Director
Juvenile Justice Project of Louisiana

DO YOU WANT ...
SAFETY
OR Vengeance!



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The information contained in this report is derived from information obtained through public records requests, OJJ's published statistics, conversations and letters from OJJ employees, newspaper articles, stories from children in OJJ custody and their parents, OJJ publications, previous litigation, and stories from judges and attorneys.

Executive Summary

In 2003, the state of Louisiana passed sweeping juvenile justice reform legislation that committed the state to a more therapeutic model of juvenile rehabilitation, borne from the recognition that the state's youth prison system was one of the most brutal in the nation. Coming in the wake of litigation by the Department of Justice on unconstitutional conditions of confinement and well publicized violence in the facilities, the reform legislation, referred to as Act 1225, committed Louisiana to adoption of a more therapeutic system of juvenile justice, based on the model developed in Missouri, and an increase in funding for community based alternatives to incarceration for youth. In the initial days of the implementation of these reforms, changes to the state system were sweeping. The most notoriously brutal youth facility, Tallulah, was permanently shut down, the population of youth incarcerated in the state dropped by more than half as young people, particularly those held for non-violent offenses, were directed to community programs, and there was a significant increase in services for youth outside of incarceration.

Unfortunately, close to a decade after the initial reforms, Louisiana has seen significant backsliding in juvenile justice reform at the statewide level. This report, written with information obtained through public records requests, statistics from the Office of Juvenile Justice, media accounts and interviews with youth and families, has documented the following failures at the Office of Juvenile Justice:

A failure of leadership to implement and sustain reform at the facilities: Leadership at the Central Office at OJJ and at the three facilities has been plagued by high turnovers, and a lack of experience in running juvenile facilities or rehabilitation prior to employment at OJJ. With such high turnover rates and little experience at senior levels of management, conditions at youth facilities have consistently deteriorated over time.

An inability to implement LAMOD, or the "Louisiana Model" based on Missouri's therapeutic juvenile justice programming, in secure care facilities: Despite a stated commitment to providing comprehensive programming, reintegration services, and a therapeutic environment, youth in Louisiana secure facilities are in environments with high levels of violence, inadequate programming, and limited reentry services. Existing procedures to grieve these conditions, such as the Administrative Remedy Process, are insufficient and flawed.

A lack of parent engagement: While partnership with parents and families is fundamental to juvenile success, parents of youth in OJJ custody report a lack of information when youth are transferred, injured, or involved in violence at facilities. Parents also report a difficult time getting questions answered by OJJ, and retaliation when they contact advocacy and support organizations.

Executive Summary, cont.

Devastating budget cuts that have hampered programming and shuttered community based services, while continuing to focus a disproportionate percentage on secure care:

In the early days of reform, the state invested funding into expanding the continuum of services for youth statewide. However, in the last two years and under the current proposed budget, Governor Jindal has consolidated OJJ services with the State Police, slashed funding for community based services, privatized healthcare in the facilities, and cut vocational programming for youth. Any success in juvenile justice reform is deeply imperiled by these cuts to the state budget.

In 2003, the state of Louisiana recognized that juvenile justice reform produced better outcomes for its citizens, youth and families, and made a commitment to this path. A decade later, the state has unfortunately strayed from this commitment, with facility and OJJ practices that are contradictory to the goals of reform. As we close out a decade since the passage of Act 1225, let this report be a clarion call for new leadership in finally moving the state back towards a model of juvenile justice based on rehabilitation, cost-effectiveness, a continuum of services for youth, and respect for youth and families.

Recommendations

OJJ's leadership needs to change immediately for the sake of Louisiana's incarcerated youth. The current administration is undoing necessary reform at the expense of Louisiana's youth. In addition to the need for the change in administration, we recommend that:

****Youth should be housed according to their age and maturity level.***

****LAMOD be fully implemented.***

****Staff needs to be better trained with dealing with youth.***

****Create regional facilities.***

****Community based programs need to become priority.***

****Dorms should be smaller.***

****Programming needs to be improved at every facility.***

****Parents need to have more involvement.***

Introduction

In October 2008, Governor Bobby Jindal appointed Dr. Mary Livers to the position of Deputy Secretary of the Office of Juvenile Justice (OJJ), following the departure of Richard Thompson.¹ Governor Jindal has entrusted Dr. Mary Livers with the rehabilitation and safety of Louisiana's delinquent youth.² In the three and a half years since her appointment to Deputy Secretary of OJJ, Louisiana's juvenile justice system has experienced frightening trends of violence and neglect permeating through the secure care facilities that house Louisiana's youth.

The Louisiana Children's Code was crafted with the idea that adjudicated youth are not placed in OJJ's custody for the purpose of punishment, or to be segregated from society; rather, they are placed in OJJ's custody for the sole purpose of rehabilitation and treatment.³ The purpose of secure care facilities is to provide intensive treatment and rehabilitative services to youth, while training them to become productive citizens; not to institutionalize and prepare them for prison.⁴

OJJ regularly boasts about their implementation of the Louisiana Model (LAMOD - Louisiana's version of the Missouri Model, which has been deemed as the national standard for juvenile care). LAMOD was created and adopted by lawmakers and other juvenile justice stakeholders in Louisiana as a therapeutic method of juvenile rehabilitation. Unfortunately, OJJ's failure to actually implement LAMOD has left youth stranded in secure care and contract detention facilities which are non-therapeutic and harsh environments.

Dr. Livers' inconsistency in communications with the media and juvenile justice stakeholders has created a facade of reform. She often discusses the existence of a therapeutic model. However, her response to proposed budget cuts is to cut alternatives to secure care incarceration.⁵ When confronted by stakeholders and community organizations about inconsistencies in her reports about actual conditions of OJJ facilities, Dr. Livers has blamed OJJ's shortcomings on the staff and directors of the secure care facilities.⁶ The replacement of directors has been a short-term solution to OJJ's problems. The overarching problems continue to exist after a director is fired and a new director is hired. The same problematic staff, policies, and harsh environment remains.

This report will highlight the many failures of OJJ under Dr. Livers' leadership that have created a harmful and non-rehabilitative environment for Louisiana's youth. Specifically, it will focus on the lack of leadership in OJJ, youth rights, the conditions of confinement, programming, policies and procedures, parent treatment, reporting, OJJ's budget, and statewide issues.



1

Really What's^Up With REFORM?

"Corrections agencies are as good as their leadership, and good leadership is needed at all levels of the organization. In fact, it is critical to having a healthy and safe correctional environment. For that to occur, it must start with the very top."

-Dr. Mary Livers

Leadership

According to published resumes, case files, and news resources, those in leadership positions at OJJ:

- ***Have little or no experience in juvenile detention or rehabilitation of youth prior to working for OJJ.***
- ***Were fired or left in disgrace from previous positions within juvenile justice entities.***
- ***Have been named as defendants in lawsuits filed based on the denial of prisoner rights, employee grievances, etc.***
- ***Operated private correctional institutions.***

Dr. Mary Livers has had a long history in adult corrections, with minimal experience in juvenile rehabilitation. In 2001, Dr. Livers left Oklahoma Department of Corrections to become the Chief Operating Officer of Avalon Correctional Service, a private operator of prisons and juvenile correctional facilities.⁷ In 2003, Oklahoma Office of Juvenile Affairs terminated Avalon's contract to operate private institutions in the state, citing budget cuts, reports documenting lack of staff training, poor education programs for the youth, and inadequate staff at the Union City Juvenile Facility to name a few of the issues that continued through the course of the contract.⁸

Dr. Livers went on to become the Deputy Secretary of Operations of the Maryland Department of Public Safety after the Avalon contract was terminated.⁹ During her tenure as Deputy Secretary of Operations, correctional employees complained of lack of staffing in the facilities which led to violent working conditions, although Dr. Livers cited poor equipment opposed to staffing as the problem that caused such conditions.¹⁰ During her tenure in Maryland, Dr. Livers was named as a defendant in four separate lawsuits on the violation of prisoner civil rights, starting in 2007.¹¹

In August, 2007, Dr. Livers announced that she would be leaving Maryland to serve as the Deputy Assistant Secretary of OJJ, formerly known as the Office of Youth Development (OYD).¹² Dr. Livers later became the Chief of Operations of OJJ and was named Deputy Secretary of the Office of Juvenile Justice by Governor Jindal in 2008. Since 2008, Dr. Livers has been named as a defendant in two lawsuits filed by previous OJJ employees regarding discrimination and retaliation.¹³ The deplorable conditions in Louisiana's juvenile detention facilities mirror that of Union City Juvenile Facility, as well as other institutions formerly directed by Dr. Livers.

The lack of experience in juvenile rehabilitation is not limited to Dr. Livers. The people she has appointed as directors of the secure-care facilities also lack quality experience in juvenile

Leadership, cont.

rehabilitation. The acting director of Bridge City Center for Youth (BCCY), Namon Reid, was originally fired from a leadership position in a juvenile facility in Washington D.C. due to his failure to immediately respond to a violent escape that occurred after business hours in his facility.¹⁴ There were also numerous reports of violent conditions within that particular facility before this escape occurred.¹⁵ Rossalyn V. Shoecraft, director of Swanson Center for Youth, served as deputy warden of Joseph Harp Correctional Facility in Oklahoma and was named as a defendant in a prisoner rights lawsuit in 1998.¹⁶ Ms. Shoecraft also served as warden of the Dr. Eddie Warrior Correctional Facility in Oklahoma from 1999 to 2000. In 2000, Ms. Shoecraft vacated her position in the public sector to become warden of Central Oklahoma Correctional Facility, owned by Dominion, an operator of private correctional institutions. During her tenure in the private sector, Ms. Shoecraft was also named as a defendant in several prisoner rights lawsuits based on conditions in the facilities.¹⁷ Prisoners alleged sexual abuse and rampant drug use in *Henry-Fields v. Burgess et. al*; 1999-2001.¹⁸ The Oklahoma Department of Corrections purchased the prison from the private operator in 2003, discontinuing Ms. Shoecraft as warden.¹⁹ From 2004-2011, Ms. Shoecraft served as the head of Janitorial Services and Pest Control at Oklahoma University.²⁰ In December 2011, Ms. Shoecraft was named as director of Swanson Center for Youth by her former boss, Dr. Livers. Both left the public sector for positions in private prisons in Oklahoma around the same time.²¹

Namon Reid and Rossalyn Shoecraft are the two newest directors of Louisiana's secure care facilities. The directors appointed by Dr. Livers seem more like placeholders than long-term leaders. The high turnover rate for the director position in each of the secure-care facilities for boys is of significant concern, and can be potentially attributed to Dr. Livers' inability to appoint directors that understand and can implement the therapeutic and rehabilitative model that LAMOD and the Missouri Model envision. Throughout her tenure, Dr. Mary Livers has consistently deferred responsibility of the facility conditions to the inexperienced directors she appoints. When facility conditions deteriorate during the appointed directors' tenure, facility directors are either transferred (Linda London, Daron Brown, Joseph Powe).²² Dr. Livers then appoints another director, although the fundamental underlying issues in the facilities are not resolved.

LAMOD

Lawsuits brought against Louisiana's juvenile prisons in the 1990's prompted legislators to do something about the deplorable conditions that plagued secure care facilities such as Tallulah and Jetson. In 2003, the Louisiana Legislature passed Act 1225, which laid the foundation for comprehensive juvenile justice reform. LAMOD, which is based on the Missouri Model juvenile system, emphasizes rehabilitation in small groups, constant therapeutic interventions, and minimal force. According to OJJ, LAMOD provides a therapeutic environment in which youth offenders receive mental health and substance abuse treatment as well as lessons in how to be successful after release. Dr. Livers and OJJ claim that they have been utilizing LAMOD since Act 1225 was passed in 2003. However, evidence shows that the current practices bear little if any resemblance to the celebrated Missouri model and that, while there were initial strides made in conditions at Louisiana facilities while under the consent decree, few instances of positive change have been sustained at OJJ.

For more than a century, the predominant model for dealing with juvenile offenders has been unchanged: confinement in large, congregate-care correctional facilities. However, numerous studies have shown that this punitive approach to juvenile justice is imperfect at best.²³ Incarcerating young people in draconian settings merely exacerbates existing behavioral problems by denying them the mental health treatment they desperately need and exposes them to abuse and constant violence. Evidence has shown that not only does youth incarceration not reduce crime rates; it also does not reduce future offending.²⁴ Our nation's heavy reliance on youth incarceration serves no purpose other than to waste taxpayers' dollars and to further widen the gap between the "haves" and the "have-nots" in our society. Many of the principles that shape our country's approach to juvenile justice are based on erroneous assumptions about what it means to be a juvenile offender as well as the best ways to deal with them. Currently, despite claims of reform, Louisiana is still operating under the traditional, punitive method of juvenile justice which needs to change immediately.

LAMOD, cont.

Effectiveness

Multiple misconceptions guide the current juvenile justice system. One misconception is that incarcerating young people will discourage them from committing crimes later in life. In reality, youth incarceration does not rehabilitate or reduce recidivism rates. According to the Annie E. Casey Foundation, about 25% of youth who are released from residential confinement in a juvenile facility are sentenced to adult prison within three years of release.²⁵ Another misconception is that locking up youth offenders improves public safety. This theory is incorrect for two reasons. First, many young people who are being held in secure care facilities were convicted of non-violent offenses. Secondly, studies have shown that states that have decreased their confinement rate have also seen a decrease in youth crime. The Justice Policy Institute has stated that the most effective programs at reducing recidivism rates and promoting positive life outcomes for youth are administered in the community, outside of the criminal or juvenile justice systems. Some of these programs have been shown to reduce recidivism by up to 22 percent.²⁶ Clearly, claims that putting young people in prison is necessary to maintain public safety and order are mistaken.

Another unfortunate reality of the juvenile justice system is that the facilities are often violent and abusive environments that only serve to further damage these troubled children. In 2010, the first national study on sexual abuse in juvenile corrections was completed. The Anne E. Casey Foundation released a report stating that the study found that 12 percent of confined youth — more than 3,000 young people — reported being victimized sexually by staff or other youth in their facilities.²⁷ Young offenders suffer from violence and abuse at the hands of fellow inmates as well as staff members in these facilities. Oftentimes, these incidents go unreported. Even worse, most of the children and adolescents who are in these facilities did not commit a violent offense. Abuse in these facilities is rampant. Victims are set up for a lifetime of physical and mental strife that will only hurt their chances at successful rehabilitation.

LAMOD, cont.

Cost

In 2008, over five billion dollars were spent to confine juveniles in secure care facilities.²⁸ According to the American Correctional Association, the average daily cost nationwide to incarcerate one youth offender in 2008 was \$241.²⁹ That equals an average cost of \$66,000 to \$88,000 to house a single youth for 9 to 12 months. There is strong evidence showing that non-secure care offers equal or better results for a fraction of the cost of secure care.³⁰ Currently, Louisiana spends 1.4 times more on each incarcerated youth than it does on each student in public school.³¹ Clearly, this is a misuse of taxpayer money. Not only are the traditional forms of juvenile incarceration ineffective, they are extremely costly. Luckily, there are alternatives.

After the passage of Act 1225 in 2003, OJJ vowed to improve conditions in Louisiana's youth facilities and implement programs that would rehabilitate, not merely punish, juvenile offenders. The increase in secure-care violence has made it abundantly clear that OJJ is not following its stated principles. The Office of Juvenile Justice claims to be using evidence-based practices, creating a safe environment for young people, and providing adequate reintegration planning. Louisiana facilities are falling short of these goals. According to a Louisiana State University report on the state of juvenile justice in Louisiana, only 11% of Louisiana juvenile justice providers surveyed are utilizing an evidence-based practice.³² Contrary to what is written on their website, OJJ does not provide youth offenders with rehabilitative counseling or reentry plans for when their sentences are finished. Juvenile offenders wait out their sentences and are not provided with treatment that would increase their chances of success upon release. Failure to learn new coping strategies and lack of mental health services in Louisiana facilities only work to increase the recidivism rate for youth. Poor conditions and overcrowding characterize Louisiana's secure care facilities. For example, OJJ is only supposed to allow for 12 children to share a dorm while often up to 16 children are crowded into a dorm.

LAMOD, cont.

Missouri

The Missouri Model, named for Missouri's unique and innovative approach to juvenile justice, offers a rehabilitative treatment that is designed to offer teens challenging experiences that assist them in making behavior changes that prepare them for re-entry into society.³³ Young people live in cottage-style dormitories that typically hold ten juveniles and two staff members. Facilities are not surrounded by barbed wire or fences. Rather, they are surrounded by trees and trust. The young people in the facilities are treated with respect and are given ample individual attention. Missouri Model facilities do not look like prisons, nor do they achieve dismal results like prisons. The Missouri juvenile system, which emphasizes rehabilitation in small groups, constant therapeutic interventions, and minimal force, is a breakthrough in juvenile detention.³⁴ The Missouri Model reduces recidivism by teaching young people coping skills and avoiding draconian prison settings that exacerbate aggressive behavior. Evidence-based practices such as the Missouri Model have been "shown to reduce re-arrests and out-of-home placements by 25-55%; improve family communication and interaction patterns; decrease drug use; and decreased mental health symptoms."³⁵ Models such as this also "help confined youth develop academic, pre-vocational, and communications skills that improve their ability to succeed following release—along with crucial insights into the roots of their delinquent behavior and new social competence to acknowledge and solve personal problems."³⁶

We are recommending that Louisiana move towards a more humane model of juvenile justice in which all children are treated with dignity and respect. All young people, no matter what their charge, have a right to clean, treatment-based confinement that will allow them to succeed on the outside. Instead of sending low-level offenders to secure care facilities and serious juvenile offenders to adult prisons, Louisiana should adopt evidence-based practices such as those that are helping young people in Missouri. Therapeutic models, such as the one OJJ has allegedly implemented, help young people move on from their past, foster personal growth, and become productive members of society. It is clear that OJJ has not done enough to implement the policies laid out by Act 1225 and because of this failure, children and taxpayers are suffering. For the sake of Louisiana's children, when will we stop state-sanctioned abuse?³⁷



2

Really What's^Up With SECURE CARE CONDITIONS?

"I'm not convinced that we need more of what I consider strictly oversight. I don't think what we need is more people telling us where we have breakdowns or what we need and what we need to do to fix those breakdowns. I think we have a good sense of that already...This is not just a corrections issue. This is a public safety and community issue. Do we really want offenders returning to the community more dysfunctional than when they were sentenced, or do we want to give them a chance for success?"

-Dr. Mary Livers

Youth Rights

Really What's^Up With SECURE CARE CONDITIONS?

Youth Grievances: Administrative Remedy Procedure

Youths' constitutional rights are being burdened and violated by OJJ's staff and policies. Youth have been denied adequate access to advocates, including attorneys. The Administrative Remedy Process (ARP) is non-existent. According to OJJ's Youth Services Policy:

*"The Administrative Remedy Procedure has been established for youth to seek formal review of a complaint relating to many aspects of their stay in secure care. Such complaints and grievances include, but are not limited to, actions pertaining to conditions of confinement, personal injuries, medical malpractice, lost personal property, denial of publications, time computation, or challenges to rules or policies. Youth shall receive reasoned responses, and where appropriate, meaningful remedies...Incoming youth shall be made aware of the ARP at orientation...Classroom teachers will formally review the ARP process with students five times per year during the final week of each grading period...ARP forms shall be available at designated sites (dorms, cafeteria, school, infirmary, etc.) at each facility and from case managers."*³⁸

Youth are supposed to be informed of this procedure during intake upon arriving at the facility. Youth should be able to obtain an ARP form that is kept next to the ARP drop box or use any piece of paper. The drop box is located in each dorm and in the cafeteria. However, many youth are not fully aware of the ARP process and feel that any attempt to file a grievance at the facility is "pointless." Many dorms are missing the ARP forms and youth are forced to ask for those forms from the staff. This defeats confidentiality since it alerts the staff that a youth is filing an ARP and that youth may be filing the grievance against the staff member they have to request the form from. Youth have told Juvenile Justice Project of Louisiana (JJPL) and Families and Friends of Louisiana's Incarcerated Children (FFLIC) that some ARP drop boxes are filled with trash, showing that they are rarely or never checked. While touring the facilities, FFLIC questioned why there were no ARP forms available for the youth. The OJJ treated this issue as a simple oversight.

In addition to the lack of availability of ARP forms, or the facility's failure to properly inform the youth of the grievance process, the process in itself is unfair and in some aspects, unconstitutional. Although Continuous Quality Improvement Services (CQIS) is responsible for monitoring the ARP process, ARPs are generally handled "in-house" by facility staff, creating a direct conflict-of-interest in handling grievances.³⁹ Youth are forced to file grievances on and seek remedies from the same staff in which they may have issues. For example, at BCCY, the ARP Coordinator is also the Director of Treatment Services. Should youth have grievances with treatment services, their ARPs will be handled by the Director of Treatment Services. There is no way to ensure that the ARP Coordinator will properly address each grievance without bias, especially if he or she is the culprit in any grievance filed.

OJJ's ARP Policy provides for CQIS to monitor the ARP process, but provides no mechanism for CQIS to hold the ARP Coordinator or facility director accountable for misconduct or failure to

Youth Rights, cont. ^{Really} What's Up With SECURE CARE CONDITIONS?

properly implement the ARP procedure. Although CQIS is to be copied on all rejections, the policy does not provide for CQIS to object to wrongful denials or rejections by facility staff. In short, there is no third party properly monitoring the effectiveness or fairness ARPs in the facilities. OJJ's ARP Policy states:

"The offender has 90 calendar days after the incident occurred in which to file a complaint. The ARP is considered 'filed' upon receipt by the ARP Coordinator or designee. This includes those ARPs placed in the ARP or grievance box over the weekend or on a legal holiday."⁴¹

This policy is not always followed. ARP boxes are not consistently checked by facility administration and complaints not checked within the 90-day limit are deemed not properly filed. Youth have lost confidence in the ARP process because previous attempts to file grievances with facility administration resulted in no action to resolve the issues. Youth typically request assistance from JJPL in filing grievances when they have lost faith in filing ARPs themselves. Because youth have reported being denied access to contact JJPL, they are forced to wait to report the grievance to JJPL. This creates more obstacles when trying to successfully file an ARP within the 90-days limit. Youth are also transferred to different facilities before ARPs can be successfully "filed" by youth, creating additional barriers in seeking remedy for grievances.

The ARP Coordinator is given free rein to reject ARPs before they can be investigated by CQIS or Investigative Services (IS). OJJ allows ARPs to be rejected for multiple reasons. ARPs can be rejected if the request is deemed unclear or if the staff feels the youth is uncooperative during the inquiry. An ARP can be rejected if it pertains to a disciplinary matter or court order in the youth's case. This rule removes remedies for youth that are unfairly punished at secure care facilities. Some youth are unlawfully physically restrained or unfairly placed on Administrative Segregation. Since those actions are deemed disciplinary matters, ARPs that concern those actions are rejected. An ARP can be rejected if the date of the incident is not on the form. The form will be returned to the youth to have the date inserted. However, the original 90-day time limit will still apply. Youth can inadvertently omit the date of the incident on the form or the grievance is being filed due to recurring incidents and the youth may not remember specific dates of the incidents. Because the youth are forced to wait on the ARP Coordinator to return the form for revisions, the 90-day time limit can be exceeded before the youth are able to make the proper revisions. Another reason an ARP can be rejected is if a youth has filed an ARP for another youth. Many of the youth in OJJ's custody are not proficient at reading or writing. Another youth might offer assistance to a youth that is having trouble communicating his or her grievance.

Yet another reason for rejection is if the request is a duplicate of a previous request submitted by the same youth. Often, youth are not informed of the status of their request and may file another grievance on the same issue, to ensure that their request has indeed been received by the ARP Coordinator. The ARP Coordinator can reject ARPs that contain more than one complaint. Youth are only allowed to place one complaint on each ARP. Listing several unrelated complaints on a

Youth Rights, cont. ^{Really} What's^Up With SECURE CARE CONDITIONS?

All claims by youth should be taken seriously, regardless of how many claims are placed on one page; especially when ARP forms are in short supply in some dorms.

Facility Due Process: Code of Conduct Hearings

Code of Conduct hearings are used to address youth violations.⁴² The Code of Conduct hearing starts with a violation report written by a staff member. A copy of the violation report is then supposed to be given to the youth. In reality, violation reports are not filed properly. Youth have reported staff skewing reports to unfairly punish them. There are no mechanisms in place to ensure proper monitoring the accuracy of staffs' reports. Youth are almost never notified or presented a copy of the report within a 24 hour period. Youth have reported many instances of not receiving a copy of violation reports until the day of Code of Conduct Hearings, or not receiving copies of violation reports at all.

Youth are supposed to receive notice of the time and date of the Code of Conduct hearing a minimum of 24 hours prior to the hearing. The Notice of Hearing should be handed to the youth or posted in his housing unit and/or dining area. Youth have reported instances of only receiving verbal notices of Code of Conduct hearings, without any documents supporting the verbal notices. If the Code of Conduct Hearing is held less than 24 hours from the time of the Notice of Hearing, a waiver must be signed by the youth and witnessed by a staff member. If the youth does not sign the waiver, the hearing must be held 24 hours after the notice is given to the youth. Youth have reported instances of their signatures being forged on Code of Conduct Waivers. JJPL has also received copies of youths' Code of Conduct waivers that have not been signed by the youth.

Every youth has the right to be present at the Code of Conduct Hearing unless he waives this right by signing a waiver or by exhibiting documented disruptive behavior. Youth also have the right to request a staff member to represent him during the Code of Conduct Hearing. Youth are almost never permitted to request staff members to represent them during Code of Conduct and they have reported being present at Code of Conduct hearings without an advocate being present. Youth have also reported having advocates who knew nothing about them being appointed by the facility administration to represent them in hearings. Youth reported not being allowed to speak on their own behalf at Code of Conduct hearings and were told leave the room while their advocate spoke on their behalf.

A youth has the right to appeal the decision to the Facility Director. Youth feel hopeless in appealing decisions made in Code of Conduct hearings because the Code of Conduct procedures are not properly followed and facility directors usually side with the staff without investigating the issues. Finally, youth can ask the Deputy Assistant Secretary to review the facility director's decision. By this point, the youth has lost all confidence in the due process proceedings of the facility and this step is rarely taken.

Youth Safety

Really What's^Up With SECURE CARE CONDITIONS?

The current state of juvenile detention in Louisiana mirrors the horrific conditions of over a decade ago when facilities like Tallulah brought national attention to Louisiana's abusive juvenile justice system.⁴³ Instances of extreme violence in the secure care facilities have become more prevalent in the last five years. Violence has been rampant within the facilities. Youth have reported broken jaw bones and limbs, abrasions, contusions, and lacerations, due to the violent atmosphere in the facilities. Youth have reported staff members physically abusing them, and reporting the abuse as "Physical Intervention" on written reports. Youth have also reported physical abuse by the facility directors and Deputy Directors at Bridge City. Parents have contacted JJPL and FFLIC due to injuries sustained by their youth inside the facilities. Youth have been transported to hospitals prior to the parents' knowledge of any injuries. JJPL Youth Advocates have witnessed severe physical bruises on youth while visiting with them inside the facilities. Youth have reported that staff members put "hits" out on them, convincing youth to abuse other youth for the purpose of revenge or "teaching a lesson." Youth have also reported rampant physical abuse within "lockdown" dormitories and in surveillance "blind spot" areas (areas where no activity is recorded such as the bathroom or showers). Staff members have also reported physical and verbal abuse from other staff members or administration.

OJJ's current staff seems to be unable to deal with the presence of "cliques" in the secure care facilities. Youth are treated like gangs when in fact they are not. Many of the youth who are from similar regions form cliques. These cliques are perpetuating the adversarial culture that has existed in secure care for years. Youth do not feel like they are in a rehabilitative environment. They feel pitted against one another. This encourages youth to band together to "survive" which defeats the purpose of LAMOD. Youth should bond for personal growth not out of fear. OJJ's response to the growing number of cliques and "disruptive" youth is the use of transfers. Youth are being transferred from between facilities as a form of punishment. These transfers have caused violence to increase in the facilities due to territorial wars. Youth from Bridge City are being transferred to Swanson and vice-versa at rapid rates. Reports of "North and South" wars have flooded JJPL's lines by youth who fear for their lives. Youth from Bridge City are being placed in dormitories with youth from Swanson, and the violence has escalated on Bridge City and Swanson's campuses. JJPL has filed several grievances on behalf of youth reporting abuse and neglect by staff members. Unfortunately, the grievance process is not properly implemented in the facilities, and the reports have not been properly investigated or remedied.

The practice of charging already incarcerated youth with adult charges is a new disturbing trend within OJJ's secure care facilities. Between July 2010 and July 2011, thirty-four youth received adult charges, forcing them to appear in adult court with the possibility of receiving additional time added to their sentence.⁴⁴ The charges included battery, assault, obscenity, criminal damage to property, and escape, to name a few. Instead of directly addressing the behavior problems of youth, OJJ calls the police on these already incarcerated youth and drags them back into the court system.

Youth Safety, cont. ^{Really} What's^Up With SECURE CARE CONDITIONS?

Another way OJJ deals with “disruptive” youth is to put them on administrative segregation, also known as lockdown (locked in their dorms or in isolated cells). Youth have reported that while on lockdown, they had been denied showers, basic personal hygiene items such as toothpaste and a toothbrush, and had been confined to their cells for 24 hour periods. These actions directly violate OJJ’s Policies, as well as state and federal laws. According to OJJ’s Institutional Policy IO-04-001, “The institution will make available to all Youths those personal hygiene items considered to be essential to maintaining proper hygiene....” The policy also states in the “Procedures” Section 10: “Personal hygiene items available to youth include soap, toothbrush, fluoridated toothpaste, comb....”

Conditions on lockdown are deplorable at all three male secure care facilities in Louisiana. Widespread abuse has been reported at each facility’s lockdown or administrative segregation dormitories. Youth are consistently denied access to legal counsel, kept in cells for 24 hour periods, and denied food while on lockdown. Youth have also reported being beaten inside their cells while on lockdown. Violence and neglect is becoming more and more prevalent throughout Louisiana’s secure care facilities.

Denial of access to healthcare has been a major concern at the secure care facilities. JJPL Youth Advocates have witnessed Correct Care Solutions⁴⁵ staff reprimand youth for requesting doctor visits, as well as verbally abusing them while in the infirmary. Several youth have reported being denied hospital visits, and being transferred to the hospital only after counselors and other facility staff members intervene and advocate for additional medical help. One youth had his skull broken by another youth, and was not transported to the hospital until hours later, and only after passing out in the infirmary. Other youth have reported being neglected by facility staff. One particular youth reported passing out due to an asthma attack and being ignored by the staff on duty. The other youth on the dormitory had to seek outside help through banging on doors and windows to gain the attention of facility staff standing outside of the dormitory. The youth was taken to the hospital after the other youth advocated for him. Youth have been repeatedly denied hospital visits for broken limbs and other serious health concerns.

Programming

Really What's^Up With SECURE CARE CONDITIONS?

Community based alternatives are a key part to the Missouri Model and are supposed to be a key part of LAMOD. Secure care should only be used to house those youth in need of intense intervention based on the nature of their offense. Keeping adjudicated youth near their families is considered best practices. Community based alternatives are designed to rehabilitate youth by keeping them near their families and integrating them into the community. The Community based alternatives in Louisiana receive their funding from OJJ. Due to proposed budget cuts, OJJ plans to eliminate or severely defund these alternatives. Dr. Mary Livers stated that she did not see the point of the community based alternatives for youth in secure care during the 2012 Juvenile Justice Reform Implementation Committee meeting.⁴⁶ This statement flies in the face of LAMOD and juvenile justice reform and is more evidence that Dr. Livers lacks the commitment to reform Louisiana's juvenile justice system. Community based alternatives are needed to offer multi-layered rehabilitation for youth to allow them to transition back into society. Focusing only on secure care and neglecting community based alternatives is a harmful step backwards for Louisiana's juvenile justice system. The fact that OJJ's leadership devalues and fails to understand the importance of community based alternatives shows an agency that is more comfortable with a punitive system that hurts children, rather than a rehabilitative one where children receive the help they need.

The education system in OJJ's secure care facilities is severely lacking. Many youth who enter OJJ's custody are academically behind. The fact they are already academically behind and incarcerated is not an excuse to offer a subpar education. Youth are given an initial evaluation during intake. From there, youth are placed in school and earn Carnegie credits (the equivalent to high school credits). At 16, youth may opt-out of the Carnegie credit courses and try to get their GED. In 2010, 194 of the 455 youth in secure care took the GED and only 62 (32%) passed.⁴⁷ In 2011, 57 youth earned their GED of the 877 youth who were in secure care.⁴⁸ Youth have reported to JJPL and FFLIC that they constantly miss school or school is a "joke" in the facilities. Youth have discussed how the frequent lockdowns have kept them from going to class.

Every 90 days, youth are supposed to have staffings which are meetings between the youth, staff members, family, and sometimes the judge and the attorney to discuss issues regarding the youth and recommend actions for that youth's benefit and progress. These meetings called "staffings" are supposed to be integral to LAMOD because it enables all of the immediate stakeholders to evaluate the placement of the youth and hopefully make a recommendation to put the youth in a less restrictive setting or a better program. Sadly, many youth experience "cancellations" of their staffings. OJJ says that staffings are never cancelled but are rescheduled. Constantly rescheduling a youth's staffing pushes back the youth's possibility of placement in a different setting or program. OJJ estimated that approximately 56 staffings were rescheduled during July 2010 and July 2011.⁴⁹ OJJ stated that the main reasons for reschedules are staff illnesses, family emergencies, and court hearings.

Really What's^Up With Programming, cont. SECURE CARE CONDITIONS?

OJJ stated that the main reasons for reschedules are staff illnesses, family emergencies, and court hearings.

Direct admission (also known as intake) is the process by which youth adjudicated delinquent are placed in a secure care facility. According to OJJ, the process involves:

“Upon arrival to the facility, the admission staff records the youth’s arrival, signs for the physical custody of the youth, and the Service Coordinator provides facility staff with information regarding the youth. A general search of the youth and his/her possessions is conducted and inventoried by facility staff. All youth have an initial health screening conducted by trained staff within one hour of direct admission to the facility. Subsequently, the youth receives medical, dental and vision assessments. All youth have an initial mental health screening conducted by a clinical psychologist, or other qualified staff. An assessment by a psychiatrist will be completed within 24 hours of admission for all youth who have a history of taking psychotropic medication. Within four hours of admission the youth will be photographed, fingerprinted and a DNA sample, if required by law, will be collected according to established protocols. All youth are allowed to contact their families within 24 hours of admission to a facility to inform parents/guardians of their physical location, the facility telephone, mail and visitation policies, as well as to discuss the initial staffing date. All youth are given the opportunity to view the OJJ facility orientation video, receive an Orientation Handbook, and a copy of the Administrative Remedy Procedure policy, a Youth Care Manual, Pledge for Safety booklet, a Code of Conduct Handbook. They are then allowed to review and discuss these items with a caseworker. During the next three days, mental and medical staff continues evaluation/assessment of the youth. The youth is given a physical fitness assessment and educational staff administer the Test of Adult Basic Education (TABE). The youth is provided with an orientation of the educational, religious and recreational services offered at each facility.”⁵⁰

After direct admission, the youth’s rehabilitation is supposed to begin immediately. A large part of the LAMOD rehabilitation involves counselors. Youth have experienced inadequate counseling due to shortage of psychiatrist or constant changes in staff. Youth have complained that some of the counselors do not spend adequate time with them and have discouraged them from reaching out to them. Youth seek assistance from JJPL and FFLIC. Many youth call JJPL just to have someone to talk because they do not know their counselor or are uncomfortable speaking to that person. The lack of staff has created a multitude of problems. Currently, staff are being forced to work consecutive shifts which make them less attentive and less affective, which leaves youth more at risk of being harmed. Youth have talked about altercations happening because an overworked staff fell asleep and did not monitor the dorm. In one instance, a frustrated staff worker left a dorm unattended because she was tired and wanted to go home. This led to the unsupervised youth taking over the dorm and barricading themselves inside. Dr. Livers admitted that keeping staff is a major issue. Dr. Livers and those she has placed in leadership positions

Programming, cont. ^{Really} What's^Up With SECURE CARE CONDITIONS?

have created an environment that is unsuitable for youth and those expected to take care of those youth. Staff members have the luxury of leaving OJJ when the working conditions become unacceptable. Sadly, Louisiana's youth do not have the same luxury when the living conditions are even worse.

Many youth leave OJJ's custody without any reintegration plan. Some spend most of their adolescence in secure care and exit without learning a marketable trade, how to fill out a job application, or how to apply to college. Youth look at their time in secure care as them "doing time" and they just look forward to their set date (the day of their release). OJJ does not understand their role in youth's rehabilitation. Youth should not be housed and released. Secure care should not be a period of idle time during a youth's key years of development. They need to be prepared to enter society as productive adults and they deserve to gain the same experience and skills that non-secure youth gain. Secure care has stifled the growth of many of Louisiana's youth and put them at a higher risk of re-offending.

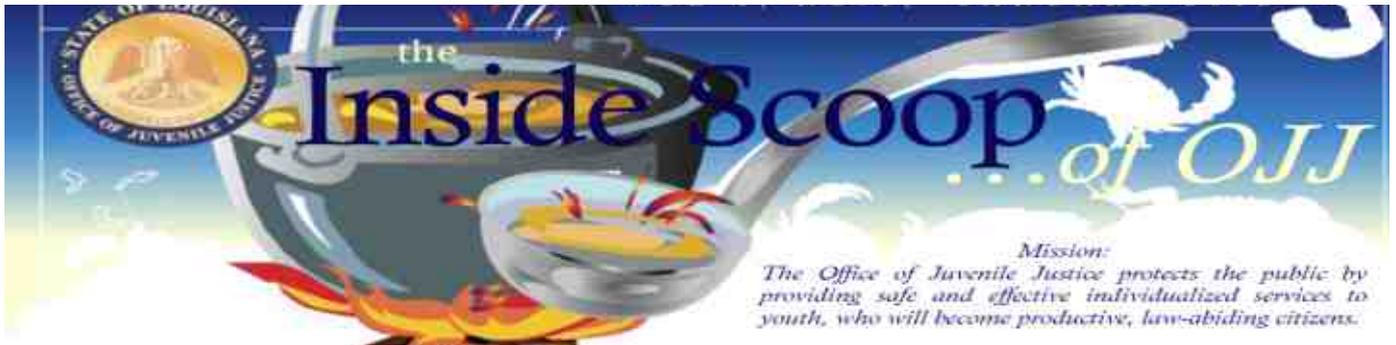
OJJ has "youth development stages" starting with orientation, following with emergent, adaptation, and transformation. Each stage awards the youth in secure-care with additional perks such as phone calls, snacks, television time, etc. The stages are not properly implemented because OJJ does not apply the actual adolescent stages of growth to these "youth development stages." Instead, OJJ uses something akin to a point system. Youth have to gain the staff's favor to gain additional amenities or perks. For many youth, the youth development stages seem more like a popularity contest than a process that rewards personal growth.

Policies and Procedures

Really What's^Up With SECURE CARE CONDITIONS?

OJJ has one policy manual (OJJ Youth Services Policy Manual) that governs all facilities. However, each facility has its own policy manual that deviates from the OJJ policy. OJJ has claimed these deviations are not changes to policies but are differences in “operating procedures,” which implies a less significant deviation. Each facility’s policy deviates from OJJ policy in areas such as youth-adult transfers, Code of Conduct proceedings, facility transfer procedures, lockdown, or administrative segregation procedures.

In the past, facility directors have admitted their lack of knowledge of their own facility’s policies. Some directors have failed to adhere to administrative procedures in policy creation, blatantly ignore existing policies, and have operated the facilities based on their own prerogative. The lack of meaningful oversight of directors has created numerous problems and discrepancies on how the each facility is ran. Youth who have been transferred to different facilities have been vocal about the stark differences on how each facility operates. Each facility seems to have its own culture and norms. These transferred youth complain about adjusting to new facilities due to the variance in the policies and culture.



3

Really What's^Up With REPORTING?

"We all know that to the extent that we can be open and honest with the public, the employees, and the offenders, the better able we are to deal with cultural and moral issues that occasionally challenge our institutions. Secrecy is toxic. We are much better served if we can name the issue and deal with the issues openly."

-Dr. Mary Livers

Parent Treatment

Really What's^Up With REPORTING?

Having a child placed in state custody is a traumatic experience in itself. Having no idea what is going on with your child while he or she is in secure care is torture. Many parents do not promptly receive “welcome packets” when their child is placed in OJJ’s custody. The welcome packet is supposed to be promptly mailed to parents in order to familiarize the parents with OJJ and their child’s placement in state custody. Parents are left in the dark when their children handed over to OJJ.

OJJ habitually fails to notify parents about the status and well-being of their children. Parents do not know whether or not their children are progressing in school since OJJ does not always send them report cards. OJJ does not notify parents when their children are suddenly, and sometimes inexplicably, transferred to different facilities. Parents have to call OJJ multiple times to find their children. Some parents are not kept informed of court dates. Parents are also not informed when their child is taken to the hospital or to an adult jail.

OJJ’s visitation policy has created a barrier between parents and their children. Many parents go months without seeing their child because OJJ “forgets” to process the parent’s visitation application. When OJJ denies a parent’s visitation request, OJJ does not contact the parent to let them know they have been denied visitation or explain the reason for denial. Parents have been known to wait around for weeks or months for a response. OJJ’s reasons for denial show how unimportant parents are to OJJ. Parents with criminal records have been denied. The discretion to deny parents who have a criminal record downplays the importance of family. A criminal record alone does not justify prohibiting a parent from seeing their child. We tell these youth that they can move past their mistakes, but OJJ holds parents to their mistakes by keeping them from seeing their children. Furthermore, OJJ’s visitation policy limits visitation to immediate family. Some youth are raised by their extended family or friends of the family. Many of the youth in OJJ’s custody have parents that are excluded because of their criminal records and the immediate family rule could leave a child without any visitors. This policy focuses more on weeding out who OJJ deems “bad parents” or unimportant, instead of offering support to the youth who are in need of it.

OJJ discourages parents or guardians from contacting them about issues concerning their children. Parents have complained to FFLIC and JJPL about how they receive no feedback or answers when they contact OJJ. Parents are put on hold, told to call back, or transferred to someone who does not know how to help them with their issue. When parents contact organizations like FFLIC or JJPL, they have been taunted and harassed by OJJ’s staff. Parents feel they only get results when they reach out for help because OJJ makes no effort to remedy their problems when they speak to OJJ directly.

Really
What's^Up Doc
Parent Stories



A mother, whose child is currently at Bridge City Center for Youth, has informed us that only now does she feel slightly included in her child's treatment plan because she began persistently calling the facility for weeks to check on her child and his progress. Originally, she said that she was not given any information about her child when he entered OJJ custody. Upon her child's intake, she was not even aware who she was supposed to call in order to receive information. When asked if staff members seem interested in her input, she said, ***"The attitude is that they are just doing it because they have to."***

A grandfather of a child at Bridge City says, ***"Every aspect of the program could be improved. There are too many changes being made without notifying the parents."***

One father notes: ***"The staffing upon intake does not give a clear explanation of what is going to happen. There are no actual documents of information, everything is verbal."***

One parent stated, ***"Kids need the support of their parents in order to succeed."***

Similar to what the director of OJJ described, one of the main problems that parents are reporting is that the facilities cannot maintain staff. ***"People are quitting left and right,"*** one mother told us. She says that her son did not receive any resources upon being released. ***"It's like a dog race,"*** she said. ***"They just cut them loose. Some of them will make it to the finish line and some of them won't."*** She also said, ***"These children are abused by guards who are supposedly there to care for them....This is what is happening and the children are afraid to say anything about it."***

Transparency ^{Really} What's^Up With REPORTING?

OJJ claims that transparency is part of their LAMOD model. This claim of transparency is hard to believe when much of OJJ's information is sealed or skewed. At a glance, OJJ's statistics seem unalarming. Information acquired from record requests and OJJ's published statistics does not match up to the reports FFLIC and JJPL receive from parents and youth. OJJ stated that only 7 ARPs had been filed at BCCY in the 2010-2011 fiscal year.⁵¹ This number is oddly low since BCCY contained over 100 different youth at various points in that year. Also, JJPL filed ARPs on the behalf of some youth. When questioned about the low number of ARPs at BCCY, OJJ replied that the correct number was 11.

Information contained in OJJ's published reports have been skewed to mask OJJ's shortcomings. OJJ has celebrated the fact that their one-year recidivism rate is only 15.1%, down from 20.50% four years ago. However, four years ago the three year recidivism rate was 45.4%. After that horrific fact, OJJ stopped keeping track of the three year recidivism rate and after the 2008-2009, they stopped keeping track of the two-year recidivism rate which was 33.10 when last recorded. Furthermore, OJJ's recidivism statistics only represent those youth who re-offend and re-enter the juvenile justice system. Those youth who re-offend and are tried as adults are not counted in the recidivism rates. The low one-year recidivism rate is great but OJJ's silence on youths later tried as adults and the multi-year recidivism rates negates transparency.

OJJ Budget

Really What's Up With REPORTING?

Currently, OJJ has a budget of \$130 million and a large percentage of youth in secure care are non-violent offenders. Therefore, millions of dollars are being directed to imprison young people who committed less serious offenses. About half the youth in secure care are adjudicated for non-violent crimes.⁵² In addition, money is not being used effectively because facilities are overcrowded and in poor repair. Louisiana seems more focused on housing many youth in large, expensive facilities instead of rehabilitating youth in cost-effective, community-based programs. Best practices reserves secure-care facilities to only a smaller number of youth and encourages a system that fosters transition to community-based programs.

Not only are evidence-based practices effective in reducing future crime, they are relatively inexpensive. OJJ reported that they spend between \$116 to \$194 per day on youth in secure care. Missouri spends about \$155 a day on juvenile offenders. The use of non-secure care would create a reduction in costs that would amount to millions of dollars in savings over time for Louisiana. Ultimately, the greatest source of savings would derive from the “success of program graduates in avoiding future crimes. Criminologists estimate that steering just one high-risk delinquent teen away from a life of crime saves society \$3 million to \$6 million in reduced victim costs and criminal justice expenses, plus increased wages and tax payments over the young person’s lifetime.”⁵³ Evidence-based practices such as the Missouri Model need to be implemented in Louisiana because they are effective, efficient, and work to protect public safety and the safety of our incarcerated youth.

Regionalization – downsizing large, centralized facilities and replacing them with a system of smaller, community-based or regional facilities that are part of a full continuum of sanctions and services – is likely to produce substantial immediate and long-term savings in the form of lower operating costs and reduced recidivism.⁵⁴ Secure facilities are particularly expensive to operate because they run 24 hours a day, 365 days a year, and have relatively high staffing ratios. Reforms that emphasize using the least restrictive sanction consistent with the needs of offenders and the safety of the community will result in reduced operating costs as many youth are moved out of secure confinement and into less expensive alternatives. In addition, reduced recidivism is likely to result as both secure facilities and other sanctions and services are better tailored to the needs of the juveniles and jurisdictions they serve.

Because secure facilities are expensive to build and operate, it is important for jurisdictions to recognize when secure incarceration is being used inappropriately for youth who can be successfully treated in other settings. Although more rigorous research into appropriate sanctions for the most serious juvenile offenders may be needed, leading authorities recognize that “community-based interventions for serious and chronic offenders can be safely expanded, and produce enormous cost savings.”⁵⁵

At the same time, the cuts to community based programming and the overall reductions in OJJ’s budget have undermined and seriously hampered the reform process. Providers of community-based programs have seen their contracts canceled by OJJ without explanation. OJJ’s process for awarding community-based programs gives more deference to lower cost over better services.



4

Really What's^Up With REGIONALIZATION?

"Today, Jetson is a model program that operates as a fully therapeutic, regional facility...Bridge City Center for Youth is a fully therapeutic regional facility."

*-Office of Juvenile Justice Website
(www.ojj.la.gov)*

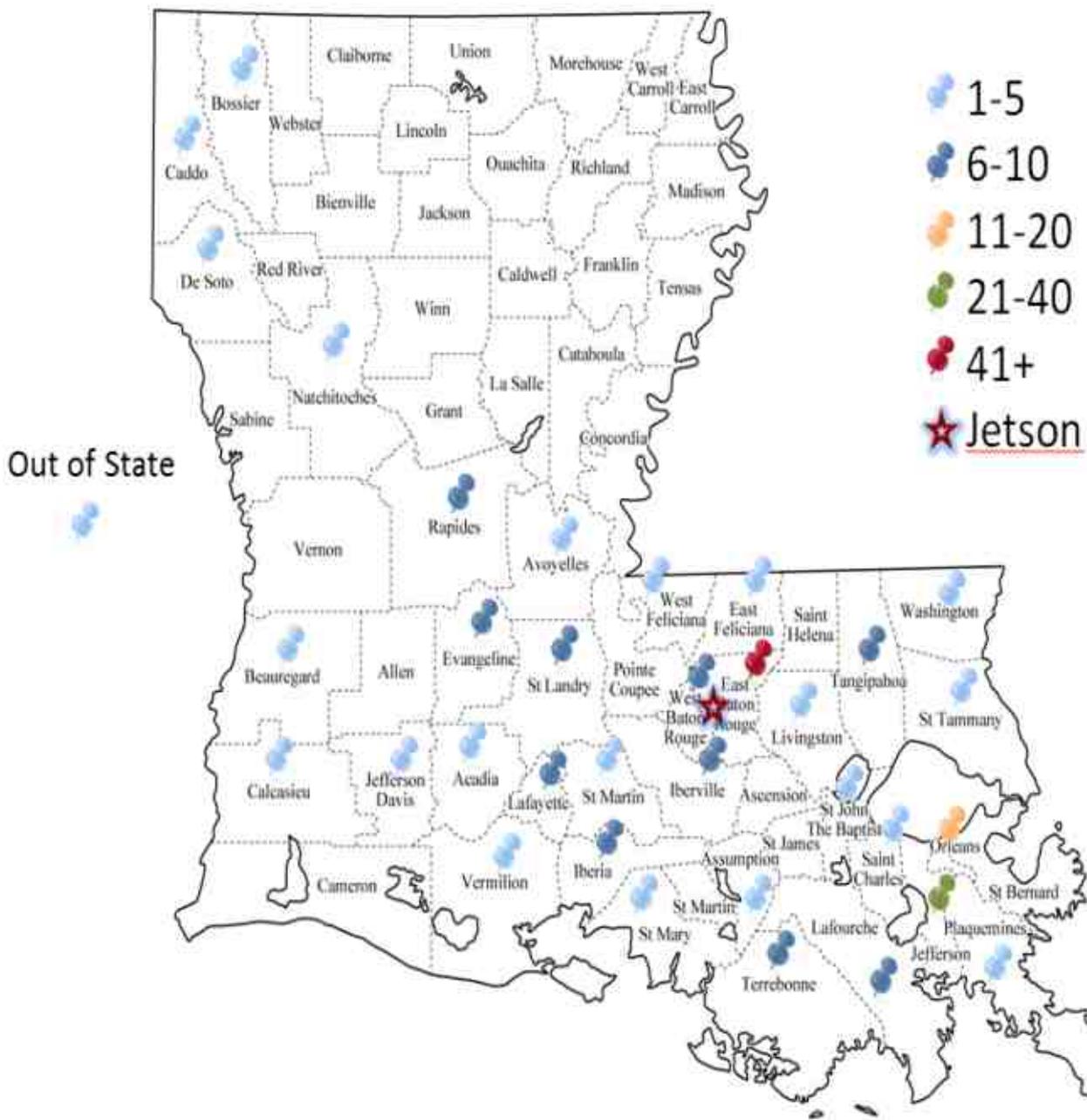
Disproportionate Minority Contact *Really* What's^Up With REGIONALIZATION?

The issues affecting Louisiana's juvenile justice system are not limited to just OJJ's shortcomings. The state of Louisiana needs to address all the issues plaguing each section of the juvenile justice system. Louisiana has experienced an epidemic called Disproportionate Minority Contact - a disproportionate amount of minorities are seen at each level of the juvenile justice system; from arrest to incarceration. Louisiana's law enforcement and justice system have to do more to prevent the unnecessary arrest and incarceration of thousands of youth. The juvenile justice system was designed to be separate from the criminal justice system in order to create a system that encourages second chances for youth. Louisiana's Children's Code gives judges ample discretion when dealing with delinquent youth. Secure care is an option, not a mandatory sentence in most cases.

Regionalization is key to LAMOD and the Missouri Model. Keeping youth close to their homes enables them to be part of their communities and have better contact with their families. Missouri has 7 facilities serving an estimated 200 youth. In Louisiana, there are 3 secure care facilities for boys and one facility for girls, serving about 600 youth. Many of the 20 to 30 girls that make it into secure care each year are forced to spend their sentence hours away from their families, depending on which region they come from. The situation is not as bad for the boys, but it is similar. A majority of the youth in each of the boys' secure care facilities are from that facility's region, but a large proportion are from other regions. Some youth are initially placed in a regional facility, but are transferred to another facility during their sentence. Swanson Center for Youth constantly experiences transfers to its facility. Many of the youth who are part of Swanson's region are from Shreveport which is 2 hours away. FFLIC encounters a lot of families that are unable to or cannot afford to visit their children when they are placed hundreds of miles away. Louisiana needs more facilities dispersed throughout the state. This would enable more parents to visit their children and it would significantly decrease the amount of youth housed in each of the current facilities, creating a more therapeutic environment. OJJ does plan to build 2 more facilities, one in southwest Louisiana and one in central Louisiana. These facilities are a step closer to the Missouri Model. Hopefully, this leads to a statewide decrease in the number of youth in each facility and regionalization is finally realized, but a culture shift will be needed for Louisiana to experience true and meaningful reform.

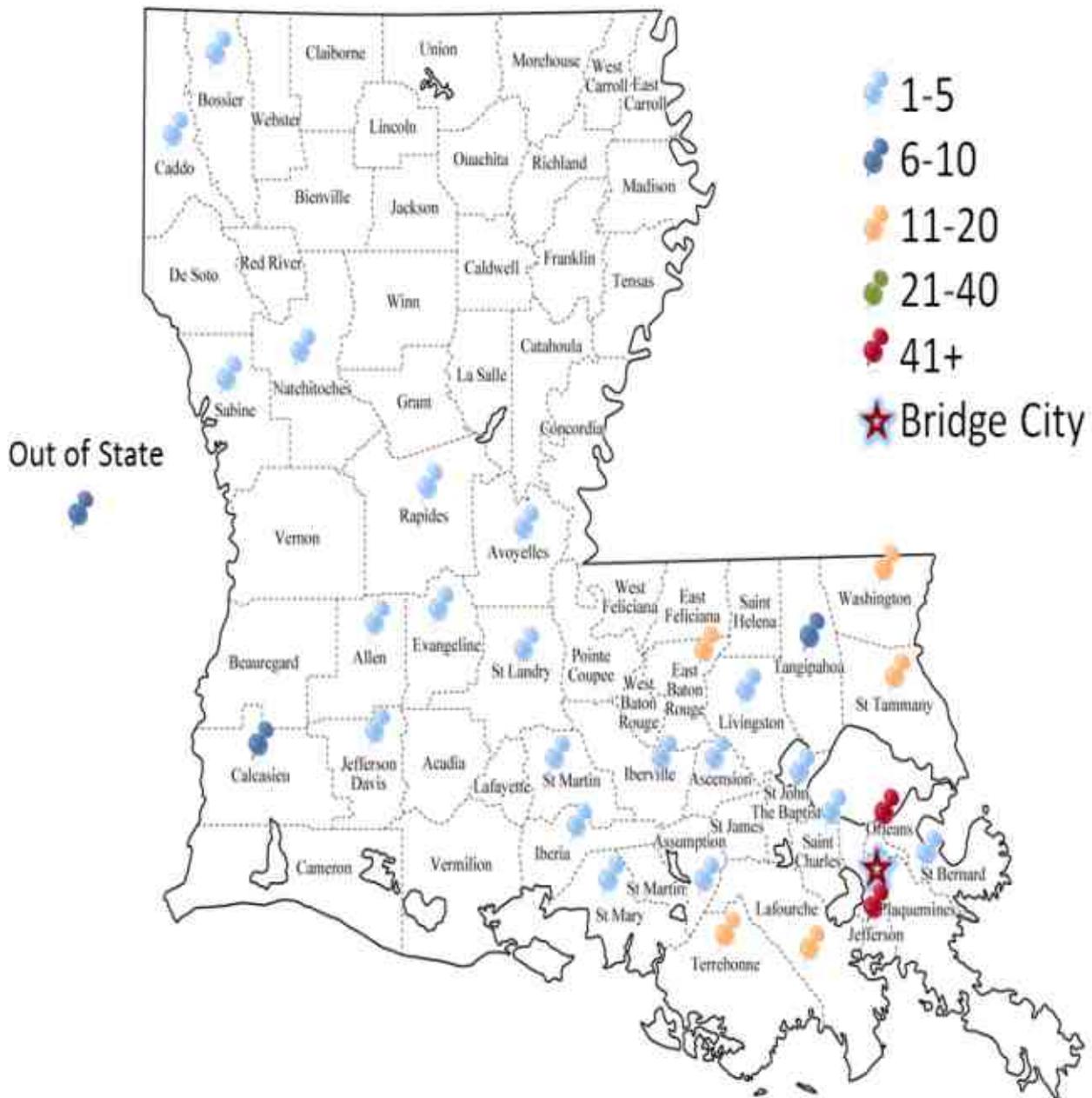
Regionalization Models ^{Really} What's Up With REGIONALIZATION?

Below are 3 charts that represent the regions that each youth in the male secure care facilities come from. This chart does not take into account transfers. The red star represents the location of the facility and each pin shows the number of youth from each parish in that facility.



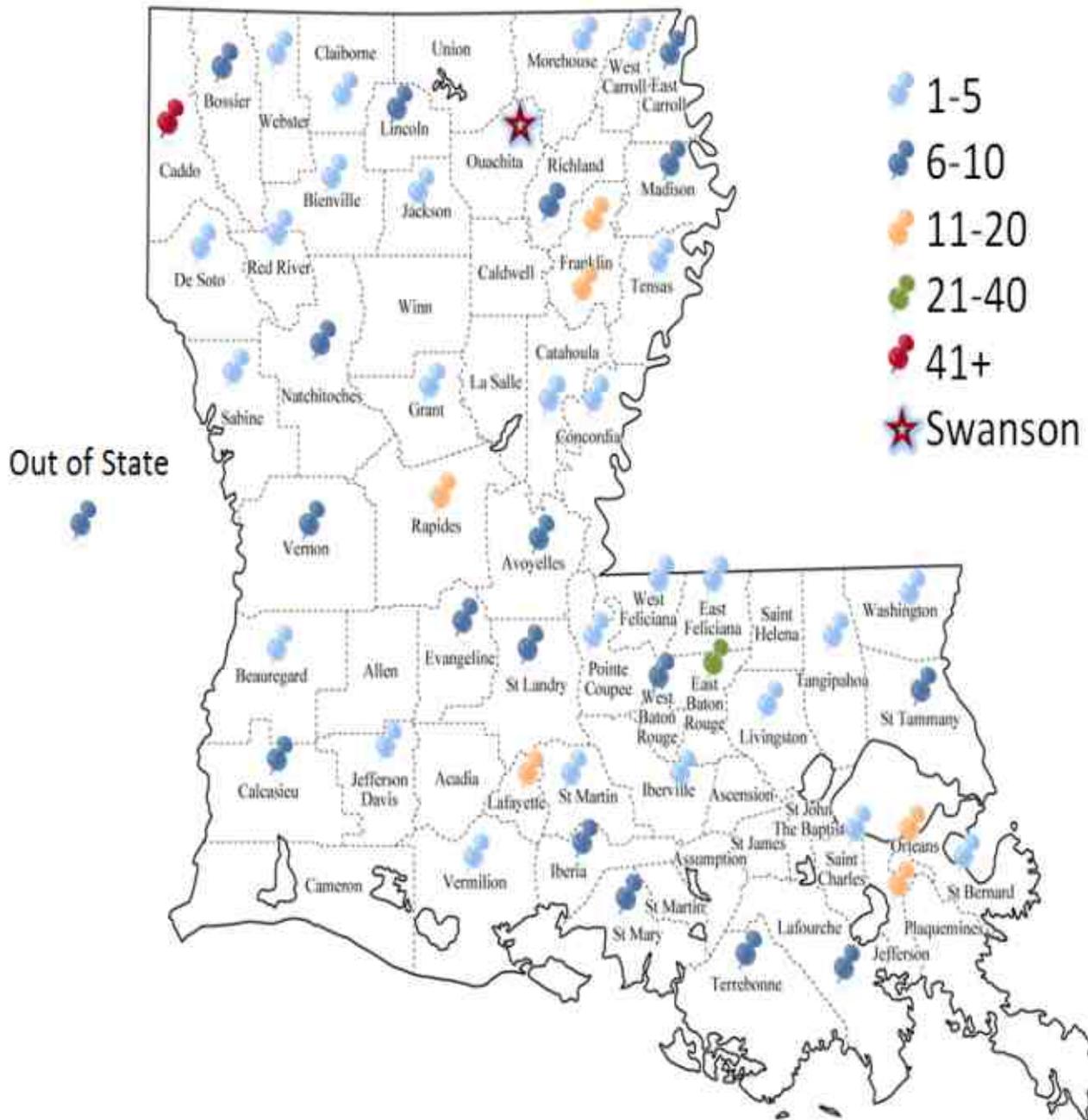
Regionalization Models, cont. ^{Really} What's Up With REGIONALIZATION?

This chart does not take into account transfers. The red star represents the location of the facility and each pin shows the number of youth from each parish in that facility.



Regionalization Models, cont. ^{Really} What's^Up With REGIONALIZATION?

This chart does not take into account transfers. The red star represents the location of the facility and each pin shows the number of youth from each parish in that facility.





5

Really
What's^Up Doc

RECOMMENDATIONS

"I think what we do need is more advocacy for our issues. We need more collaborative partnerships that will work with correctional leaders, our professional organizations, and our political systems to change the landscape of American prisons..."

-Dr. Mary Livers

Really What's^Up Doc

Recommendations

OJJ's leadership needs to change immediately for the sake of Louisiana's incarcerated youth.

The current administration is undoing necessary reform at the expense of Louisiana's youth. In addition to the need for the change in administration, we recommend that:

- Youth should be housed according to their age and maturity level. Conflicts arise when children are incorrectly grouped together in secure care.

- **LAMOD be fully implemented.** LAMOD needs to offer a demanding, carefully crafted, multi-layered treatment experience designed to challenge troubled youth, help them make lasting behavioral changes, and prepare for successful transitions back to the community.

- **Staff needs to be better trained with dealing with youth.** Staff training should be ongoing and they receive new information on how to do their job even better on a consistent basis as set forth by policy.

- **Create regional facilities.** Regional facilities would help address the issues with cliques forming within the facilities. It was also enable more parents to visit their children and make it easier for youth to transition back into their communities.

- **Community based programs need to become priority.** Rehabilitation needs an incentives and levels. Community based programs offers a "step down" for incarcerated youth. Community based programs are cost effective and part of best practices.

- **Dorms should be smaller.** Smaller dorms would decrease violence and enable staff to better interact with and manage the youth.

- **Programming needs to be improved at every facility.** Youth in secure care need more extra-curricular options, skill training, and education. Adolescent is an important time in a child's development and it should not be wasted while in secure care.

- **Parents need to have more involvement.** The family of the child is a vital and necessary part of the treatment plan and they are the experts on the child. There needs to be more actions taken to ensure families can participate in the child's treatment.

Really What's^Up Doc CONCLUSION

The Office of Juvenile Justice has regressed in their reform efforts during Dr. Mary Livers' tenure. Stakeholders have been advocating for reform of the Office of Juvenile Justice for years. That advocacy has been demoted to a memory by OJJ, while abuse and neglect thrive in secure care facilities.

True reform effort cannot be implemented by only bragging about the adoption of LAMOD by the Office of Juvenile Justice. True reform can only occur during actual implementation of best practices.

OJJ is responsible for doing what is in the best interest of Louisiana's incarcerated youth. Placement in state custody does not lower the humanity of incarcerated youth. Incarcerated youth deserve every opportunity and right that all non-incarcerated children are entitled to. OJJ was not created to house youth like a prison. OJJ was created to rehabilitate Louisiana's incarcerated youth so that they may reach their full potential.

It is now Governor Jindal's responsibility to mandate true reform of the Office of Juvenile Justice, by changing leadership, and improving implementation of LaMOD.

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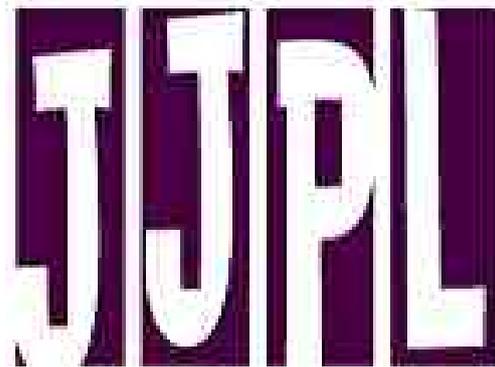
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Families and Friends of Louisiana's Incarcerated Children (FFLIC) is a statewide membership-based organization that fights for a better life for all of Louisiana's youth, especially those involved in or targeted by the juvenile justice system or the "school to prison pipeline."

The Juvenile Justice Project of Louisiana (JJPL) is a statewide advocacy organization dedicated to transforming the juvenile justice system into one that builds on the strengths of young people, families, and communities to ensure children are given the greatest opportunities to grow and thrive.



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