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**JUVENILE JUSTICE MONITORING UNIT  
OFFICE OF THE ATTORNEY GENERAL  
STATE OF MARYLAND**

**FOURTH QUARTER REPORT  
AND 2022 ANNUAL REVIEW**

## The Maryland Juvenile Justice Monitoring Unit (JJMU)

The Juvenile Justice Monitoring Unit (JJMU) at the Office of the Maryland Attorney General is responsible for reporting on Maryland Department of Juvenile Services (DJS) operated and licensed facilities across the state. Monitors from the unit conduct unannounced visits to these sites to guard against abuse and ensure youth receive appropriate treatment and services.

The mission of the JJMU is to promote the transformation of the juvenile justice system into one that meets the needs of Maryland's youth, families, and communities. This mission is accomplished by collaborating with all who are involved with the system.

The Unit has access to DJS incident and case notes databases and to DJS internal investigation and grievance documents. Monitors spend significant time gathering information and observing all aspects of operations. We sit in on activities and classes, interview youth, staff and administrators, and review incident-related footage and original incident report documentation. The JJMU issues public reports covering each calendar quarter. These reports include data and analysis concerning treatment of and services provided to youth in DJS detention and placement facilities throughout our state. Formal responses from DJS and the Juvenile Services Education Program (JSEP - which assumed responsibility for education services in DJS facilities at the end of June of 2022) are included within our published reports.

The JJMU has been instrumental in driving positive changes in the Maryland juvenile justice system since its formation in the wake of widespread systemic abuse issues. The activities of the monitoring unit increase the transparency and accountability of the juvenile justice system and raise awareness of the needs of justice-involved Maryland youth. We will continue to push for the adoption of best practices as we evaluate current and emerging research that serves to both enhance public safety and produce positive outcomes for young people in contact with the juvenile justice system.

## **JJMU Fourth Quarter Report and 2022 Annual Report Compendium**

The Maryland Juvenile Justice Monitoring Unit (JJMU) issues public reports covering each calendar quarter that include data and analysis concerning treatment of and services provided to youth in Maryland Department of Juvenile Services (DJS) directly run and licensed facilities throughout Maryland. Enclosed please find the unit's compilation of fourth quarter 2022 reports and an annual calendar year 2022 review.

The Maryland Department of Juvenile Services' response and a response from the Juvenile Services Education Program are included, as indicated on the contents page.

The JJMU Fourth Quarter Report and 2022 Annual Review Compendium was produced by Margi Joshi, Nick Moroney, Tim Snyder, and Marvin Stone. Thanks to Taran Henley, Fritz Schantz, and Maria Welker.

We respectfully submit this report to the Governor, members of the Maryland General Assembly, the Secretary of the Department of Juvenile Services, and to the State Advisory Board for Juvenile Services as required under Maryland law.

Current and prior reports of the Maryland Juvenile Justice Monitoring Unit and related responses are available at:

<http://www.marylandattorneygeneral.gov/Pages/JJM/default.aspx>



JUVENILE JUSTICE MONITORING UNIT  
OFFICE OF THE ATTORNEY GENERAL  
STATE OF MARYLAND

April 2023

The Honorable Wes Moore, Governor  
State of Maryland

The Honorable Bill Ferguson, President of the Senate  
Maryland General Assembly

The Honorable Adrienne A. Jones, Speaker of the House of Delegates  
Maryland General Assembly

Members of the General Assembly

The Honorable Vincent Schiraldi, Secretary  
Department of Juvenile Services

Members of the State Advisory Board for Juvenile Services

Dear Governor Moore, Senate President Ferguson, Speaker of the House Jones, Secretary Schiraldi, and State Advisory Board Members:

This report summaries progress and challenges in the Maryland juvenile justice system in addition to offering individual sections on each facility directly operated by the Department of Juvenile Services (DJS).

The first section of the report offers an assessment of the current state of juvenile justice in Maryland. Of particular note, over the past ten years, crimes of violence involving youth declined by 57%; non-violent felonies fell by 69%; and misdemeanors declined by 82%. During the same time period, there has been a 78% reduction in complaints (equivalent to charges in the adult criminal justice system) forwarded to DJS.

There has been a corresponding drop in the numbers of young people sent to out-of-home placement through DJS – those numbers have dropped by almost 80% over the past decade.

More recently, the number of youths held in DJS secure detention facilities has also fallen significantly - by 46% over the past seven years (between 2015 and 2022).

While great progress has been made, much work remains to be done. Although the overall number of young people facing secure detention and out-of-home placement has declined in Maryland in recent years, racial disparities have actually grown – the proportion of incarcerated children and youth of color has increased at the same time as the raw number of incarcerated youth in Maryland has greatly decreased. This disparity must be addressed.

Additionally, it is still the case that many of the young people who are sent out-of-home could be served in the community as they do not represent a threat to public safety – this is particularly the case for a significant proportion of the girls and young women who end up in secure detention and placement because of unmet needs.

There are many youths stuck in the deep end (secure detention and/or placement facilities) of the juvenile justice system who are facing severe mental health challenges. These young people need professional help and resources and sending them to DJS facilities is entirely inappropriate.

Community-based organizations can intervene early and effectively by providing support and resources to impede the cycling of youth ever deeper into the justice system. If we want to keep crime down and decrease recidivism rates, we must invest in all our communities and ensure that they are properly resourced.

Respectfully submitted,

*Nick Moroney*

Nick Moroney  
Director  
Maryland Juvenile Justice Monitoring Unit

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# JUVENILE JUSTICE MONITORING UNIT FOURTH QUARTER REPORT AND 2022 ANNUAL REVIEW

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## DJS Hardware Secure Detention

### Short-term, pre-disposition/pending placement

- Baltimore City Juvenile Justice Center (BCJJC)
- Cheltenham Youth Detention Center (CYDC)
- Charles H. Hickey, Jr., School (Hickey)
- Thomas J.S. Waxter Children's Center (Waxter)  
*[closed in March of 2022]*
- Alfred D. Noyes Children's Center (Noyes)  
*[temporarily closed for several months in 2022]*
- Western Maryland Children's Center (WMCC)
- Lower Eastern Shore Children's Center (LESCC)

## DJS Committed Placement

### Long-term, post-disposition

- Victor Cullen Center (Cullen)
- Garrett Children's Center (GCC)  
*[temporarily closed]*
- Mountain View *[closed in 2022]*
- Backbone Mountain and Green Ridge youth centers (two youth centers)
- Silver Oak Academy (SOA) [DJS licensed]

## Incident and Population Trends

Calendar year 2022 population and incident trends versus 2021:

- ✓ Physical restraints decreased in committed placement at Cullen.
- ✓ The use of mechanical restraints decreased in committed placement at Cullen and the two youth centers.
- ✓ The use of seclusion decreased in committed placement at Cullen.
- Average daily populations (ADP) of youth increased at all currently open DJS detention centers and at all DJS-operated committed placement centers.
- Youth on youth fights and assaults increased at all currently open DJS secure detention centers.
- Physical restraints increased at all currently open DJS secure detention centers and in committed placement at the two youth centers.
- Mechanical restraint usage inside facilities increased in secure detention at CYDC, Hickey, LESCC, and WMCC.
- Seclusions increased in secure detention at BCJJC, CYDC, Hickey, LESCC, and WMCC.
- There were 119 incidents involving suicide ideation, two suicide attempts, and 67 incidents of self-injurious behavior at DJS-operated facilities in 2022. Incidents of self-injurious behavior increased by 34% compared to 2021.

# Juvenile Justice Reform in Maryland



## Juvenile Justice Reform in Maryland

In recent years, the state of Maryland has made substantial headway in addressing the need for reform in the juvenile justice system so that it is more responsive and better equipped to address youth, family, and public safety needs. At the same time, publicly available data shows reductions in every reported category of youth crime in Maryland over the past decade. Crimes of violence involving youth declined by 57%; non-violent felonies are down by 69%; and misdemeanors fell by 82%.<sup>1</sup>

It is not surprising therefore that, over the same time period, there has been a 78% reduction in complaints (equivalent to charges in the adult criminal justice system) forwarded to the Department of Juvenile Services (DJS).<sup>2</sup> These complaints are usually forwarded through law enforcement entities.

The number of young people sent to an out-of-home placement through DJS has dropped by almost 80% over the past decade. There has also been a significant decline in the youth detention population, particularly in recent years; between 2015 and 2022, the number of youth held in maximum security (also called hardware secure) DJS detention facilities fell by 46%.<sup>3</sup>

However, much work remains to be done. While the overall number of young people facing secure detention and out-of-home placement has declined in Maryland in recent years, racial disparities have actually grown – the proportion of incarcerated children and youth of color has increased at the same time as the raw number of incarcerated youth in Maryland has greatly decreased. This disparity must be addressed.

Additionally, it is still the case that many of the young people who are sent out-of-home could be served in the community as they do not represent a threat to public safety – this is particularly true of a significant proportion of the girls and young women who end up in secure detention and placement because of unmet needs.

There are also many youth stuck in the deep end (secure detention and/or placement facilities) of the juvenile justice system who are facing severe mental health challenges (see BCJJC section, page 14). These young people need professional help and resources and sending them to DJS facilities is entirely inappropriate. Public and private providers and local and state entities specializing in the delivery of mental health services must not be allowed to continue to abrogate responsibility by abandoning poorly resourced and vulnerable children and youth to be locked up in the juvenile justice system.

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<sup>1</sup> Maryland Juvenile Services Long-Term Trends FY 2012 – FY 2021, DJS Office of Research and Evaluation (January 2022), available at: [Maryland Juvenile Services Long-Term Trends FY 2012 – FY 2021](#)

<sup>2</sup> Ibid.

<sup>3</sup> Ibid.

The abandonment of poorly resourced children and youth in our state extends to their families and communities and, while DJS facility budgets have been somewhat reduced in line with physical plant closures, the savings have not been significantly reinvested in the Department's community-based services. Over the past ten years, investment by DJS in community services decreased from 32 million dollars to 27 million dollars (out of a total departmental annual operating budget that averages over 250 million dollars).

Community-based organizations can intervene early and effectively by providing support and resources to impede the cycling of youth ever deeper into the justice system. If we want to keep crime down and decrease recidivism rates, we must invest in all our communities.

It is also important to acknowledge the harm that comes with imprisoning young people. Reductions in youth confinement are unequivocally a positive development. There is a growing body of evidence that shows "that incarceration is an ineffective strategy for steering youth away from delinquent behavior and that high rates of youth incarceration do not improve public safety. Incarceration harms young people's physical and mental health, impedes their educational and career success, and often exposes them to abuse. And the use of confinement is plagued by severe racial and ethnic disparities."<sup>4</sup> In addition,

"incarcerating adolescents impedes their ability to mature psychologically – exactly the opposite of what's needed to foster positive behavior change and promote desistance from delinquency. Studies find that youth who are incarcerated in correctional facilities develop psychosocial maturity at far slower rates than comparable peers who remain at home in the community. In other words, the purported solution (incarceration) does not address the underlying cause of the conduct (immaturity). Rather, confinement hinders the process of desisting from delinquency by disrupting young people's opportunities to learn, grow, and participate in essential rites of passage associated with adolescent development – everything from dating to employment to driver's education."<sup>5</sup>

Maryland law and the conditions and nature of youth confinement in juvenile detention and placement centers can be changed and further improved to better align with evidence-based practices through carrying out the following recommendations:

### **End the Automatic Prosecution of Children and Young People as Adults**

Maryland continues to automatically charge youth as adults for certain acts despite a growing recognition that treating kids as adults and pushing them into the adult criminal justice system endangers their physical and mental well-being, exacerbates trauma and fails to protect public safety.

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<sup>4</sup> Mendel, Richard (December 2022), "Why Incarceration Fails: An Updated Review of the Evidence: Executive Summary", The Sentencing Project, available at: <https://www.sentencingproject.org/reports/why-youth-incarceration-fails-an-updated-review-of-the-evidence/>

<sup>5</sup> Ibid.

The automatic prosecution of children and young people as if they were adults is a relatively recent practice that takes away the balance afforded by court discretion to weigh allegations, charges and circumstances on a case-by-case basis when deciding whether to subject youth to the adult criminal justice system.

Maryland prosecutes more children in the adult system than any other state apart from Alabama, and Maryland youth of color are disproportionately tried in adult court.<sup>6</sup>

The state should end the automatic prosecution of youth as adults.

**End the use of compliance-oriented, high-cost, and remotely located DJS placement sites that are lacking in culturally competent trauma-informed care, and where there is little or no exposure to constructive engagement in positive on- and off- site activities or meaningful opportunities for robust job readiness, apprenticeship, and employment programs. Replace these ineffective institutions and the concomitant punitive approaches to young people with a continuum of residential and non-residential community programs to better serve individual youth needs.**

As the current Secretary of the Maryland Department of Juvenile Services accurately notes of youth correctional centers, “Too often, such facilities are located hours from youths’ home communities and devoid of structured programming. They are frequently brutal congregate care environments in which youth are huddled in idleness with many others who have broken the law in a stressful and sometimes violent tug of war with the only adults with whom they come into contact—correctional officers”.<sup>7</sup>

Furthermore, studies show that institutional programs are expensive and generally ineffective at providing appropriate treatment and rehabilitative services to youth and reducing recidivism.<sup>8</sup> The cost of sending a young person to a remote DJS placement facility in Maryland in fiscal year 2022 ranged (depending on the specific facility) from approximately \$313,000 to approximately \$507,000 per child, per year.<sup>9</sup>

In contrast, “community-based programming that can provide individualized, wraparound services based on the unique needs of each youth and that engage family and connect the youth

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<sup>6</sup> See Maryland Juvenile Justice Reform Council Supplemental Report (page 11), available at: [https://dls.maryland.gov/pubs/prod/NoPblTabMtg/CmsnJuvRefCncl/JJRC-Report-Final\\_2021SupplementalReport.pdf](https://dls.maryland.gov/pubs/prod/NoPblTabMtg/CmsnJuvRefCncl/JJRC-Report-Final_2021SupplementalReport.pdf)

<sup>7</sup> Schiraldi, Vincent, (June 2020), “Can We Eliminate the Youth Prison? (And What Should We Replace It With?)”, Square One Project Executive Session on the Future of Justice Policy, page 16, available at: [CJLJ8234-Square-One-Youth-Prisons-Paper-200616-WEB.pdf \(squareonejustice.org\)](https://squareonejustice.org/CJLJ8234-Square-One-Youth-Prisons-Paper-200616-WEB.pdf)

<sup>8</sup> Bonnie, R.J., Johnson, R.L. Chemers, B.M., & Schuck, J.A. (2013) Reforming juvenile justice: A developmental approach. Washington DC: National Research Council, p. 33, and 155. <https://nap.nationalacademies.org/catalog/14685/reforming-juvenile-justice-a-developmental-approach>

<sup>9</sup> Calculated from information publicly available in the DJS Data Resource Guide for FY 2022, accessible at: [https://djs.maryland.gov/Documents/DRG/Data\\_Resource\\_Guide\\_FY2022.pdf](https://djs.maryland.gov/Documents/DRG/Data_Resource_Guide_FY2022.pdf)

to neighborhood resources” can cost much less.<sup>10</sup> The Department and the State of Maryland should prioritize the expansion of community-based treatment and programming resources rather than investment in maintaining congregate care institutions located far from youth homes.

**Replacement of remotely located congregate care facilities with community alternatives will require a reinvestment of resources. To this end, the Department should work toward creating the capacity for local communities highly impacted by the justice system to serve the needs of kids living in those communities and their families.**

As juvenile justice researchers and advocates recognize, “By reallocating resources to support education, expand employment opportunities, improve public health services, and develop sustainable housing, decision-makers can stabilize communities and make them partners in responding to underlying public safety concerns.”<sup>11</sup>

**Incarceration puts young people at risk for violence-related injuries and often creates and/or exacerbates underlying mental health and trauma-related conditions. Incidents of aggression and self-harm increased throughout DJS facilities in 2022. To help improve facility culture across DJS detention and placement sites and minimize the harms of incarceration, DJS should:**

- Shift from a mindset of punitive discipline, control and compliance prevalent across all DJS-facilities to an emphasis on creating therapeutically oriented milieus in which youth have access to nurturing relationships and abundantly available opportunities, resources and tools to foster skill building, growth, healing and future success. To accomplish this goal, it will be necessary to increase mental health staffing on the ground and work towards integrating mental health professionals into all aspects of daily facility life. Mental health staff should make frequent rounds on living units, hold more group and individual sessions with young people, be available during school and visitation hours for consultation, and conduct training for facility staff. In addition, mental health professionals must have more say in operational and programmatic decision-making in every facility and at the headquarters level. Too often custody decisions trump treatment recommendations, and empowering mental health experts within the agency can create a more reasonable balance between security and safety issues and treatment concerns.

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<sup>10</sup> Justice Policy Institute, “Sticker Shock: The Price We Pay for Youth Incarceration.” December 2014, p.14 [http://www.justicepolicy.org/uploads/justicepolicy/documents/sticker\\_shock\\_final\\_v2.pdf](http://www.justicepolicy.org/uploads/justicepolicy/documents/sticker_shock_final_v2.pdf)

<sup>11</sup> Justice Policy Institute (2020) Sticker Shock: The Cost of Youth Incarceration. Justice Policy Institute, Washington DC, available at: <https://justicepolicy.org/research/policy-brief-2020-sticker-shock-the-cost-of-youth-incarceration/>

- Reassess operations and facility leadership and remove individuals that have not demonstrated an ability to both create and maintain a safe environment and provide engaging and relevant programming for youth.
- Recognizing that effective facility management includes the ability to provide plentiful opportunities for meaningful programming and activities for youth in custody, DJS should partner with local agencies and organizations to bring in programming options for incarcerated youth with an emphasis on mentoring, education, employment, and enrichment services that can continue once a youth is released.
- Recruit qualified staff with a passion for helping youth succeed and with the experience, skills, and necessary temperament to effectively work with incarcerated young people. Provide advanced and on-going training to teach staff how to build positive relationships with young people and employ de-escalation strategies to address crisis situations rather than privileging the use of force and control tactics to maintain order. The Department plans to provide training to placement center staff on a newly created Comprehensive Treatment Model (CTM) which is grounded in the principles of Cognitive-Behavioral Therapy (CBT), Dialectical Behavior Therapy (DBT), and trauma-informed care<sup>12</sup>. This initiative must be expanded to include detention center staff. DBT and trauma-informed interventions could be especially beneficial for incarcerated girls both in detention<sup>13</sup> centers and placement facilities.
- Further prioritize family contact by increasing opportunities for in-person and virtual family engagement and broaden the restrictive departmental definition of “family” so that it encompasses supportive individuals that may be outside of the immediate family circle.
- Invest in high quality education programming. Fill vacancies for teaching and education support staff and expand (the currently limited) course offerings and library and media services. Create tutoring programs to help students overcome the substantial learning loss that accompanied the virtual instruction and self-taught schooling (using “packets”) which have been prevalent inside DJS schools throughout the COVID-19 pandemic and

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<sup>12</sup> See [Maryland DJS Comprehensive Treatment Model | The Council of Juvenile Justice Administrators \(cjjj.net\)](#)

<sup>13</sup> Modifying Dialectical Behavior Therapy for Incarcerated Female Youth: A Pilot Study  
Banks, Breanna; Kuhn, Tarah; Blackford, Jennifer Urbano. Journal of Juvenile Justice; Arlington Vol. 4, Iss. 1, (Winter 2015): 1-17. <https://ojjdp.ojp.gov/library/publications/ojjdp-journal-juvenile-justice-volume-4-issue-1-winter-2015>

to the present day. Provide an array of long- and short-term vocational course work and experiences and employment opportunities (including off-site internships and apprenticeships in high-demand trades) for incarcerated young people so that they have a path to continuing success upon release. Expand the availability of post-secondary education options and supports for high school graduates including the ability to attend college (off- and on-site) and the option to work, intern and volunteer both within the facility and in nearby communities.

- Front-line staff at many facilities report high rates of overtime, burnout and low morale due to continued staffing shortages inside DJS detention and placement facilities and a lack of faith in leadership at both the facility and headquarters level. Staffing issues affect the ability of a facility to create and maintain a structured and safe environment and impact the level and quality of youth services and programming. Recent initiatives to increase salaries for direct-care staff in conjunction with hiring events throughout the state of Maryland have started to ease some staffing pressures. The Department should continue efforts to increase direct-care staffing across all DJS facilities and focus on improving working conditions and establishing employee support services to help retain staff. DJS employees do not enjoy parity with colleagues employed in the state corrections system – this disparity must be addressed and not ignored.
- Additionally, new leadership should assess employee morale by conducting listening sessions with agency staff and should also provide a mechanism for anonymous employee feedback as retaliation fears for voicing concerns about facility working conditions are a major employee concern.

Through continued (and deeper) reform efforts, effective collaboration, and a holistic approach to serving the needs of youth, families, and communities, the juvenile justice system in Maryland can further its goal of enhancing public safety and promoting positive outcomes for system-involved youth.

# **COVID-19 Response in Juvenile Services’ Facilities**



## COVID-19 Response in Juvenile Services' Facilities

COVID-19 outbreaks and infection response and mitigation efforts continue to impede youth development and academic progress and take a toll on the physical and mental health of incarcerated young people inside DJS facilities - even as outside youth prison walls, community life has begun to return to normal.

Exposure to COVID-19 is a daily occurrence within DJS-operated placement and detention system, while youth in facilities continue to be subjected to conditions of quarantine and medical isolation in which activities including in-person school services are severely limited. Throughout 2022 and into the present, masking requirements have continued to be in place for youth and staff. Structured programming and volunteer-led initiatives have been curtailed and have not returned to pre-COVID levels. A protracted and overly bureaucratic vetting process and stringent COVID-19 testing requirements which requires volunteers to submit weekly to PCR COVID-19 test results causes many potentially valuable volunteers to give up or lose interest (see WMCC, page 35). In addition, basic hygiene-related services such as barbering and hair dressing are not consistently provided to youth, in part because of onerous COVID-19 testing requirements.

Prolonged periods of isolation and quarantine impact facility operations and contribute to elevated levels of depression, anxiety, and boredom among incarcerated young people. Youth who test positive for COVID-19 are placed in medical isolation and are required to stay inside their cell for 23 hours per day for five to ten days. In addition to the fear and physical malaise (for symptomatic youth) that accompanies infection, isolation can lead to severe psychological distress. Moreover, a significant percentage of youth in DJS custody have histories of trauma and have been diagnosed with mental disorders which can make them more vulnerable to the harmful effects of prolonged isolation.

Carceral settings are designed in a way that prevents the implementation of straightforward methodologies to mitigate against disease transmission, and corrections-oriented administrators and staff within DJS facilities lack the professional expertise to adequately address the psychological toll that quarantine and isolation can have on youth.

For example, detained girls in the state of Maryland are currently being held on one unit at Cheltenham Youth Detention Center for boys. COVID-19 positive girls are not separated from other girls on the unit and are instead required to medically isolate in their cells on the unit. There was an outbreak of COVID-19 on the girls' unit requiring multiple weeks of quarantine which began at the end of the fourth quarter of 2022. During this period, medically vulnerable girls, including a pregnant youth and a youth with sickle cell anemia, were housed on the unit. The girls were provided with packets of schoolwork to do on their own as most living units at Cheltenham are not equipped to provide access to virtual school. Girls reported being extremely bored and feeling very frustrated about their situation during the weeks-long quarantine period.

In Incident 172732, a COVID-19 positive girl on medical isolation behind a locked cell door at Cheltenham asked for her cell door to be cracked open. Custody supervisors denied her



request and told her the denial was because she was on medical isolation. The girl then stated she was suicidal. Custody staff then went inside her cell, removed everything from her cell, and patted the girl down for contraband and put her on suicide watch. The sick girl then stated she wasn't suicidal and wanted her items back. Custody supervisors said she would have to wait until mental health could see her and they would determine if she could have her items back.

A COVID-10 outbreak also occurred on the girls' unit at the hardware secure placement center Victor Cullen during the fourth quarter of 2022. Management there enlisted the aid of another youth to help keep a COVID-19 positive and medically isolated girl stable. As a supervisor explained to Department investigators, "It was day seven that [the COVID-19 positive and medically isolated girl] had been back in that hallway; for seven days, and she was the only child to be back there, in that room by herself. [The two girls] normally calm each other down. Earlier that day [the COVID-19 positive girl on medical isolation] had destroyed her room. So, I placed the chair across the hallway for [another girl] to sit down and assist with de-escalating [the COVID-19 positive and medically isolated girl]" (Incident 172484).

The same girl who was enlisted to help with the isolated girl was trying to cheer up her peer earlier in the week and was given a disciplinary report (which means loss of privileges and potentially the addition of more incarceration time added to the girl's length of stay at the facility) by a different supervisor for breaking the DJS rules surrounding the medical isolation of youth.

The Department needs to adopt a holistic approach to youth wellness and prioritize the mental health and social and emotional well-being of youth inside DJS facilities while updating and adhering to evolving infection control measures to prevent COVID-19 transmission. Emphasis should be placed on the following:

- Creating and implementing a variety of recreation and enrichment activities and outlets, especially during periods of quarantine and on weekends and after-school time
- Easing COVID-19 testing requirements for barbers, hairdressers and other providers and volunteer staff to help ensure essential services for youth return with a level of consistency. This goal can be accomplished for, by example, requiring outside service personnel and volunteers to take a rapid test provided by DJS on arrival instead of requirements for visitors to submit a PCR test to the agency before being allowed to enter a facility.
- Easing masking requirements for youth with no known exposure to COVID-19.
- Having mental health staff take on a proactive and substantive role in facility decision making especially as it pertains to assisting high needs youth as well as those in crisis and in helping keep all incarcerated youth stable and engaged throughout their stay, but especially during periods of isolation or quarantine.
- Re-introducing activities and opportunities to participate in facility-wide sports tournaments that build comradery and cohesion and serve as a meaningful incentive to reduce boredom, frustration and anxiety and mitigate against the occurrence of incidents involving acting out, aggression or self-harm.

- Minimizing school disruptions by:
  - Privileging in-person instruction, discontinuing the use of worksheets as a substitute for instruction and utilizing remote learning as a last resort and only when absolutely necessary. According to public health and education experts, “reduced access to in-person learning is associated with poorer learning outcomes and adverse mental health and behavioral effects in children.”<sup>14</sup>
  - Even during periods of virtual education, enabling some education personnel to be on site and with students at each facility during the entire school day to provide academic assistance and help with logistics and glitches in operating the virtual education program. Teaching staff could work on a rotating basis or have limited working hours when in contact with youth to mitigate possible exposure to infection. Interaction and assistance from on-site educators during school hours would benefit students and help school operations run more smoothly and productively.
  - Bringing in tutors to provide individualized help for students who have experienced learning loss as a result of disrupted education.

The holistic approach to youth wellness outlined above can help alleviate the harms caused by incarceration and the physical and mental adverse effects that occur when young people are imprisoned during an ongoing public health crisis.

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<sup>14</sup> Oster E, Jack R, Halloran C, et al. “Disparities in Learning Mode Access Among K-12 Students During the COVID-19 Pandemic by Race/Ethnicity, Geography, and Grade Level – United States, September 2020 – April 2021”. *Morbidity and Mortality Weekly Report (MMWR)* 2021;70:953-958. DOI: <http://dx.doi.org/10.15585/mmwr.mm7026e2>

# DETENTION CENTERS

## Baltimore City Juvenile Justice Center

The Baltimore City Juvenile Justice Center (BCJJC) is a hardware secure (maximum-security) detention center for boys. The Maryland Department of Juvenile Services (DJS/the Department) owns and operates BCJJC. The DJS-rated housing capacity is 120 beds. Black youth represented 90% of total entries in 2022 compared to 86% in 2021.

<b>BCJJC – Selected Incident Categories</b>	<b>2020</b>	<b>2021</b>	<b>2022</b>
<b>Average Daily Population (ADP)</b>	<b>48</b>	<b>37</b>	<b>63</b>
1. Youth on Youth Assault/Fight	188	151	202
2. Alleged Youth on Staff Assault	25	29	19
3. Physical Restraint	237	211	226
4. Use of Handcuffs and/or Shackles	56	62	62
5. Seclusion	45	72	79
6. Contraband	18	9	23
7. Suicide Ideation	5	11	24
8. Suicide Attempt	1	1	2
9. Self-Injurious Behavior	5	2	8

The average daily population at BCJJC increased by 70% in 2022 compared to 2021. When comparing the same time periods:

- Youth on youth incidents of aggression increased by 34%.
- Use of physical restraints increased by 7%.
- Use of seclusion increased by 10%.

- Incidents involving contraband increased by 155%.
- Instances of suicide ideation more than doubled and incidents involving self-injurious behavior increased four-fold.
- There were two suicide attempts at BCJJC in 2022.

Although there was an increase in population, the use of mechanical restraints (handcuffs and/or leg irons) inside the facility did not increase (62 instances in both 2021 and 2022).

### **Youth Safety and Facility Security**

BCJJC continues to operate as a prison-like environment, and staff are ill-equipped to provide the level of care needed to keep youth stable. Youth consistently report unprofessional and antagonistic interactions with staff and feel that staff are not able to keep them safe. During monitoring visits in the fourth quarter of 2022, youth reported that some staff could be very disrespectful toward them. For example, one youth reported that a staffer told him, “If I was your peers, I would beat your ass.” The youth reported that when kids respond verbally to the disrespect they experience, they are issued or threatened with disciplinary citations and loss of privileges.

Other incidents throughout the fourth quarter of 2022 demonstrated that staff regularly fail to intervene to prevent serious incidents from occurring. In Incident 172198, a youth with a history of aggressive incidents was in a school classroom. The youth got up from his seat and walked out of his classroom where he began assaulting a youth from another living unit who was walking past the classroom. The staffer positioned at the door of the classroom did not get up from her seat or in any way try to intervene to stop the youth from leaving the classroom.

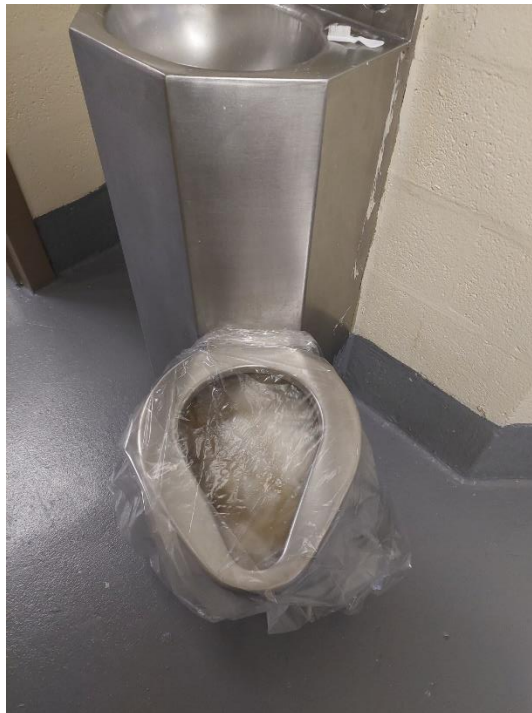
In Incident 172181, the same youth was agitated at a teacher and stood up from his seat. Another youth tried to de-escalate the youth as a staffer who was present remained seated and unresponsive to the situation.

The flow of contraband into the facility is an ongoing major concern. Items found in youths’ possession included cell phones and chargers (Incident 172280 and 172273).

Both incidents (172273 and 172280) prompted an investigation by the Department’s internal investigation unit (Office of the Inspector General [OIG]). The investigation resulted in significant findings of staff misconduct.

## **Physical Plant Issues**

Youth and staff also report unsanitary conditions inside the facility including gnat infestations in living areas and dining halls and frequent sewage back-ups. In one situation during the quarter, a youth's toilet inside his cell was clogged and plastic wrap was placed on the toilet (see picture below). The youth's toothbrush was left uncovered on top of the adjoining sink inside the cell.



## **Youth With High Mental Health Needs**

Youth in need of specialized mental health services continue to be inappropriately placed in detention environments where their conditions often worsen. A youth in need of specialized mental health care was involved in several incidents of self-injurious behavior while housed at BCJJC during the fourth quarter of 2022, including attempts to swallow items such as bottle caps, batteries, and toothbrushes (Incidents 172342, 172271, 172195) as well as reported suicide ideation (Incident 172417).

Direct care staff at DJS detention and placement facilities do not receive specialized training in preventing, managing and treating severely agitated youth who may be prone to

experiencing mental health crises due to their underlying psychiatric conditions. Detention centers lack specialized resources and the particular professional clinical expertise and clinical staffing levels necessary to address the needs of this population and instead rely on physical and mechanical restraints, social isolation from peers, and seclusion, to manage youth behavior.

The Maryland juvenile justice system cannot become a default component of the State mental health system. Maryland state government and its various departments need to comprehensively address the current severe shortages of in-patient psychiatric facilities and comprehensive community-based mental health services. The lack of treatment resources for mentally ill children is causing delays in performing professional team evaluations of youth in crisis as well as delays in facilitating appropriate community-based and residential placements for young people in need of specialized mental health services.

### **Lack of Quality Programming**

Persistent boredom and a dearth of meaningful programming is prevalent across all DJS-operated facilities and is especially acute at BCJJC. An area set up for a music production class has not been used and an arcade area is only available to the limited number of youth who can maintain consistent compliance with the strictures of the points-based behavior management system rather than being utilized as an activity in which all youth can participate. Youth frequently lament the lack of access to books and other reading materials to keep them engaged, and despite the strong motivation of young people to be able to read more, a room designated as an in-house library has not been completed and stocked with reading materials. There has also been no consistent effort to honor youth requests for regularly held classes on fatherhood and parenting nor has there been any meaningful response to requests for mentoring services.

BCJJC needs caring and capable leadership that is able to provide supportive resources in a safe environment. Increasing the number of structured activities that appeal to youth interests and forming partnerships with locally based individuals and organizations to provide services to incarcerated young people could improve the facility climate, help reduce the number of aggressive incidents, and offer opportunities for the young people incarcerated at BCJJC to cultivate positive connections and develop new skills that can assist them upon release.

### **Education**

The Maryland State Department of Education (MSDE) was responsible for the delivery of instruction, resources and services for students in the schools within Department of Juvenile Services' (DJS) operated detention and placement facilities until June 28, 2022. Starting at the end of June, an independent Juvenile Services Education Program (JSEP) Board focused solely on education in DJS facilities took over responsibility for education services inside DJS facilities with implementation and resource assistance from DJS.

The school at BCJJC, in common with other JSEP schools, is plagued by many educator vacancies and this factor hinders the ability of the system to deliver high quality in-person

instruction to students. There were vacancies for special education, science, and math teachers and guidance counselors during the fourth quarter of 2022.

For more information on education services in DJS facilities, see the JSEP section which begins on page 55.



## Cheltenham Youth Detention Center

Cheltenham Youth Detention Center (CYDC), located in Prince George’s County, is a hardware secure (locked and fenced) detention center owned and operated by the Department of Juvenile Services (DJS/the Department). The DJS-rated housing capacity is 72 young people. Black youth represented 73% of total youth entries in calendar year 2022, compared to 77% in 2021. Hispanic/Latino youth represented 15% of entries in 2022 compared to 14% in 2021.

<b>CYDC – Selected Incident Categories</b>	<b>2020</b>	<b>2021</b>	<b>2022</b>
<b>Average Daily Population (ADP)</b>	<b>42</b>	<b>28</b>	<b>41</b>
1. Youth on Youth Assault/Fight	120	60	105
2. Alleged Youth on Staff Assault	6	7	20
3. Physical Restraint	178	101	179
4. Use of Handcuffs and/or Shackles	11	3	20
5. Seclusion	13	21	72
6. Contraband	16	8	17
7. Suicide Ideation	5	7	19
8. Suicide Attempt	3	1	0
9. Self-Injurious Behavior	14	11	44

The average daily population at CYDC in 2022 increased by 46% when compared to 2021. Incidents also increased substantially during 2022. Comparing the same time periods:

- youth on youth fights and assaults increased by 75%.
- use of physical restraints increased by 77%.

- use of mechanical restraints (handcuffs and/or leg irons) inside the facility increased by 560%.
- incidents of seclusion increased by 243%.
- incidents of suicide ideation more than doubled and incidents involving self-injurious behavior quadrupled.
- incidents involving contraband inside the facility more than doubled.

## **Detained Girls**

Due to both facility and staffing issues, detained girls were displaced several times throughout 2022.

The physical plant at Waxter, the DJS-operated all-girls detention center located in Laurel, Maryland, was aged, cramped and in disrepair. The Department refurbished the Noyes secure detention center in Montgomery County to serve as an all-girls detention facility. Noyes is also an old and space-challenged facility, but the physical plant is in slightly better condition in some respects than the wholly decrepit Waxter center. Girls at Waxter were transferred to Noyes in March of 2022.

In April of 2022, an AC handler unit caught fire at the Noyes facility and girls were relocated to a unit at Cheltenham Youth Detention Center for boys while repairs were made to the AC unit. The girls were transported back to the Noyes facility in June of 2022.

In mid-October of 2022, the Noyes facility for girls was temporarily closed again and, once again, detained girls awaiting adjudication and multiple staff from Noyes were transferred to Cheltenham, this time in order to help address a long-ignored critical staff shortage at Cheltenham. At time of writing (February 2023), detained girls remain cramped together on a single living unit at Cheltenham which has a total of 12 cells. The Department plans for the facilities to remain combined until staffing issues are stabilized at Cheltenham. In the meantime, whenever capacity is reached on the unit housing girls at Cheltenham, newly detained girls are transported to Lower Eastern Shore Detention Center in Salisbury, Maryland.

Girls in the juvenile justice system have different medical, reproductive health, mental health, and trauma-related needs than boys. As long as the state continues to incarcerate girls<sup>15</sup>, they deserve adequate space and a setting with their own designated school and medical suite that are tailored meet their particular circumstances. Relegating detained girls to a unit at a boys' detention facility due to the Department's failure to proactively address problems with retaining and recruiting staff (to the point that staffing levels reach a crisis inside a facility), indicates problems with operations oversight at the headquarters level. This nonperformance was chiefly due to failing to act despite multiple warnings about the dire situation at Cheltenham where

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<sup>15</sup> Some states and jurisdictions have committed to ending the incarceration of girls by devoting resources to community-based interventions, supports, and programs that can better serve the needs of young people. See Dholakia, Nazish and Rosenthal, Lindsay (October 4, 2022), "Hawai'i is so Close to Ending the Incarceration of Young Girls", Vera Institute of Justice, available at: [Hawai'i Is So Close to Ending the Incarceration of Young Girls | Vera Institute](#)

staffers turning up for duty were being regularly held over for double shifts back-to-back. The treatment of the detained girls that resulted from this failure demonstrates a willful disregard on the part of the Department for the well-being of girls in their custody. As one Noyes staffer commented, “they just treat these girls like chattel, moving them constantly from one place to another without thinking of how it will impact them.”

Before moving from Noyes - a facility devoted to girls’ needs – staff were better able to manage group dynamics and to accomplish medical quarantining of newly admitted and COVID-19 positive youth without impacting the entire population of girls at the facility. In contrast, a recent outbreak at Cheltenham among the girl’s unit resulted in several other girls subsequently testing positive for COVID-19 and a protraction in quarantine for all the girls that lasted several weeks – this situation shows how vulnerable the girls are without adequate living space. The girls’ academic performance has also demonstrably suffered with the move to Cheltenham. Before the forced moves from Noyes, the girls had their own school with a dedicated cadre of teachers and principal to provide individualized attention. However, academic gains seriously eroded (as reflected in class grades) when the girls were moved to Cheltenham (twice) in 2022. The frequent temporary closures of the Noyes facility in 2022 also contributed to teacher attrition (at a time when Noyes, like most other JSEP schools, is grappling with teacher shortages). For example, an experienced special education teacher who had worked at Noyes for several years resigned during the fourth quarter of 2022 due to the long commute she had to endure while being temporarily (but with no definite planned end date) assigned to Cheltenham. Even basic hygiene services such as hair care for girls were disrupted as the Department has not been able to contract with a hair stylist to come to Cheltenham. The Department initially indicated that Noyes would reopen in January of 2023, but the facility remains shuttered as of this writing (in March of 2023).

### **Staffing and Severe Operational Shortcomings**

Unfortunately, and in tandem with the influx of additional staff drafted into Cheltenham from the closed Noyes facility, the youth population at Cheltenham continues to increase and, in recent weeks (as of February of 2022), the facility is nearing capacity. The Department is currently working on addressing staffing issues which include related issues of excessive (and sometimes forced) staff overtime and a high number of staff vacancies. The Department’s self-determined minimum mandated staff to youth ratios at Cheltenham were changed by DJS Headquarters from one staff per six youth to one staff to eight youth to ease staffing requirements at the facility. This is not a desirable or safe modification. In any case and despite the change, units were still at times out of ratio during the fourth quarter of 2022. A staffer was observed on a unit during a monitoring visit supervising 11 youth by himself. Aside from this situation contravening even amended DJS mandated staffing ratios, a minimum of two staffers should be in each occupied living unit at all times during waking hours (even if just one youth is present in the unit) to help maintain safety and stability.

Staffing issues continued to be a leading contributor to disruptions to facility schedules and curtailment of youth services throughout the fourth quarter of 2022 and skipped or barebones services and a lack of organized activities (even when documented as scheduled) remain ongoing and significant problems at time of writing (February of 2022). For example,

school days are shortened or cancelled when there are not enough staff to monitor hallways or escort youth to and from classrooms. During a monitoring visit in the fourth quarter of 2022, two youth were refusing to go to school and, as a result, students from an entire living unit remained on unit during the school day as there was not enough staff coverage available to both have some staffers remain with the two refusers and have other staffers escort the remaining youth to school. Youth are also frequently forced to eat on the units rather than travelling to the cafeteria in order to minimize youth movement and enable the skeletal staff plan to function.

### **Incidents**

Problematic youth dynamics led to several group assaults targeting individual youth during the fourth quarter of 2022, and issues regarding supervision of youth movement and maintaining adequate structure are ongoing concerns.

In Incidents 172513 and 172517, several youth on a living unit assaulted another youth.

In Incident 172406, a youth was in a living unit movie room and there were no staff present. Three youth ran into the room and assaulted the youth already inside.

In Incident 172290, several youth were walking around a living unit when a youth grabbed another's youth's juice and ran around the unit with it. A staffer slipped and fell on spilled juice as staff were trying to gain control of the situation. A youth also fell and hit his head on the ground.

Administrators at Cheltenham are working on enhancing staff training to improve safety, structure and supervision at the facility.

### **Lack of Activities**

Young people consistently report the need for more constructive activities at Cheltenham where the primary outlets to alleviate boredom are playing cards, basketball, and watching TV/movies on DVD. Youth express interest in participating in music production classes and activities, photography and art classes and intra-facility athletic tournaments. However, without adequate staffing, implementing programming is a challenge. Cheltenham does have a large fenced-in outdoor space at the back of the facility with a track, football field, and exercise equipment, ostensibly for youth use. This area has rarely been utilized since the facility opened, apart from a handful of instances and special events. The Department has indicated that utilizing the outdoor space requires more staff supervision than the facility is able to provide. The facility also has a ceramics studio that has not been used for several years. Youth at CYDC are provided with MP3 players, however many youth reported that they can only use the devices to listen to the radio. Unlike all other detention centers, they are not allowed to have music downloaded to the players (even clean versions of approved songs vetted by security) because staff are not able to handle the workload and management involved in choosing/vetting, downloading and updating the music.

## **Education**

The Maryland State Department of Education (MSDE) was responsible for the delivery of instruction, resources and services for students in the schools within Department of Juvenile Services' (DJS) operated detention and placement facilities until June 28, 2022. Starting at the end of June, an independent Juvenile Services Education Program (JSEP) Board focused solely on education in DJS facilities took over responsibility of education services inside DJS facilities with leadership provided by a new superintendent and implementation and resource assistance provided by DJS.

There were vacancies for a principal, special education teacher, and science teacher at CYDC during the fourth quarter of 2022.

Several youth expressed interest in GED prep courses and taking the GED while detained at Cheltenham during the final quarter of 2022. Multiple youth were eligible to take the test based on promising scores on practice tests, however there is no official testing site at Cheltenham and students had to wait for a mobile testing lab to come around or until space opened up at Hickey detention center in Baltimore County (the only GED testing site open to youth in detention and hardware secure settings) to take the test. (Youth are shackled and transported by van to and from the test at Hickey). Some students were released from detention before they were able to take the test.

Students expressing interest in taking the GED should be helped to prepare for the exam, and testing sites should be expanded to include more facilities with priority placed on opening testing sites at the two large detention centers (BCJJC and Cheltenham) which do not have testing capabilities onsite though they house most of the detained youth in Maryland.

For more information on education in DJS facilities, see the JSEP section of this report which begins on page 55.

### Charles H. Hickey, Jr., School

The Charles H. Hickey, Jr., School (Hickey) in Baltimore County is a hardware secure (locked and fenced) detention center for boys. Hickey is owned and operated by the Department of Juvenile Services (DJS/the Department) and has a DJS-rated housing capacity of 72 beds. Black youth accounted for 80% of entries in calendar year 2022 compared to 76% in 2021.

Hickey – Selected Incident Categories	2020	2021	2022
<b>Average Daily Population (ADP)</b>	<b>36</b>	<b>37</b>	<b>49</b>
1. Youth on Youth Assault/Fight	106	80	162
2. Alleged Youth on Staff Assault	6	6	11
3. Physical Restraint	110	74	170
4. Use of Handcuffs and/or Shackles	10	6	37
5. Seclusion	13	11	49
6. Contraband	8	8	7
7. Suicide Ideation	11	8	5
8. Suicide Attempt	0	0	0
9. Self-Injurious Behavior	1	2	5

The average daily population of youth at Hickey increased by 32% when comparing 2022 to 2021.

During the same time period:

- Youth on youth fights and assaults and physical restraints of youth by staff more than doubled.

- Use of mechanical restraints (handcuffs and/or leg irons) inside the facility increased by 516%.
- Use of seclusion increased by approximately 345%.
- Incidents involving self-injurious behavior increased (from 2 instances in 2021 to 5 instances in 2022).

Incidents of suicide ideation decreased (from 8 instances in 2021 to 5 instances in 2022).

### **Youth with Physical Disabilities**

Detention centers are not designed to meet the needs of children with significant physical disabilities. During the fourth quarter, a paraplegic young person with bowel and bladder dysfunction was detained at Hickey. The young person could not shower with privacy and dignity because the facility shower was not configured to accommodate his needs. The youth could not enter the shower with his wheelchair because of a step at the entrance of the shower. In addition, the handheld shower head was mounted high on the shower walls which the youth could not reach. As a result, the youth had to shower in an area outside the shower stall and place the shower head on the floor after he was done showering.



Step at entrance of shower



Shower head



Area outside shower stall

The youth was also concerned that he could not maneuver his wheelchair up hills on facility grounds and so required assistance from other youth or staff.

Youth with serious physical disabilities should not be held in a detention facility environment.



## **Physical Plant**

The physical plant at Hickey is old and in need of updates. During the fourth quarter, black stains were observed on shower walls.



Youth also complained of suffering from bug bites due to insect infestations. Regular cleaning and extermination services should be provided, and the results monitored to maintain a hygienic environment.

## **Recreation**

Hickey has several meaningful programming options for youth including a music production program, a photography program, a life skills class, and a group exercise module led by recreation staff. These offerings are in addition to the availability of ongoing living unit-based activities such as arts and crafts, board games, and regularly scheduled events such as ice cream socials, pizza nights, and unit decorating contests. Administrators should continue their efforts to create and offer youth a variety of outlets for positive engagement on a regular basis.

## **Education**

The Maryland State Department of Education (MSDE) was responsible for the delivery of instruction, resources and services for students in the schools within Department of Juvenile Services' (DJS) operated detention and placement facilities until June 28, 2022. Starting at the end of June, an independent Juvenile Services Education Program (JSEP) Board focused solely on education in DJS facilities took over responsibility of education services inside DJS facilities with implementation and resource assistance from DJS.

The school at Hickey - and at most DJS facility schools - have on-going vacancies for educators which negatively impacts the ability to provide high-quality in-person instruction to students. During the fourth quarter of 2022, there were vacancies for social studies, math, science, resource, and CTE teachers at Hickey.



Post-secondary options for high school graduates continue to be severely limited for youth in detention. Youth who are eligible for online community college courses must wait until the start of the semester to enroll in classes. High school graduates who do not want to take community college courses and graduates enrolled in online college courses who are waiting for the semester to start are required to sit in high school classes during the school day where they are often bored and unengaged.

For information on education in DJS facilities, see the JSEP section of this report which begins on page 55.

### **Shelter Care**

A shelter care program for boys and girls was recently opened on Hickey grounds outside of the fenced area of the facility. The program is run by DJS administrators at Hickey detention center, and direct-care staff from Hickey provide supervision for the small number of youth that are court-ordered to shelter care.

Rather than a home-like environment, the shelter arrangement resembles a detention-like setting in terms of services offered and opportunities afforded for positive contact with the outside community. Youth are required to wear detention-issued clothing and shoes rather than their own apparel. Youth have a limited number of phone calls to family and report a lack of constructive activities to keep them engaged. Supervised off-ground activities are prohibited and youth are not allowed to shop for and cook their own food (as there is no kitchen in the dorm-like living area). They are also not allowed to attend local schools and, during the fourth quarter of 2022, were instead being provided with school-related packets to complete on their own instead of attending in-person or even virtual school classes.

### Thomas J.S. Waxter Children’s Center

The Thomas J.S. Waxter Children’s Center (Waxter) in Anne Arundel County was a hardware secure (locked and fenced) detention center for girls. Waxter was operated by the Department of Juvenile Services (DJS/the Department) and had a DJS-rated housing capacity of 32 girls. The facility closed in March of 2022. Black girls represented 65% of entries during the first quarter of 2022 compared to 74% in the first quarter of 2021.

<b>Waxter – Selected Incident Categories</b>	<b>2020</b>	<b>2021</b>	<b>2022<sup>16</sup></b>
<b>Average Daily Population (ADP)</b>	<b>17</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>11</b>
1. Youth on Youth Assault/Fight	27	13	5
2. Alleged Youth on Staff Assault	14	8	0
3. Physical Restraint	72	65	14
4. Use of Handcuffs and/or Shackles	7	23	2
5. Seclusion	15	6	0
6. Contraband	4	5	0
7. Suicide Ideation	49	36	7
8. Suicide Attempt	5	1	0
9. Self-Injurious Behavior	4	8	1

Due to both facility and staffing issues, detained girls were displaced several times throughout 2022.

<sup>16</sup> Waxter closed in March of 2022. Average daily population and incident numbers listed in the chart are from the first quarter of 2022 only.

The physical plant at Waxter was aged, cramped and in disrepair. The Department refurbished the Noyes secure detention center in Montgomery County to serve as an all-girls detention facility. Noyes is also an old and space-challenged facility, but the physical plant is in slightly better condition in some respects than the wholly decrepit Waxter center. Girls at Waxter were transferred to Noyes in March of 2022.

In April of 2022, an air conditioner handler unit caught fire at the Noyes facility and the girls were relocated to a unit at Cheltenham Youth Detention until repairs could be made to the AC unit. The girls returned to the Noyes facility in June of 2022.

In mid-October of 2022, the Noyes facility for girls was temporarily closed again and detained girls awaiting adjudication and multiple staff from Noyes were again transferred to Cheltenham in order to increase staff availability at Cheltenham. At time of writing (February 2023), detained girls remain in a residential unit at Cheltenham which has a total of 12 cells. Once capacity is reached on that unit, newly detained girls are sent to Lower Easter Shore Detention Center in Salisbury, Maryland. The Department needs to prioritize the care of the girls and young women in its care.

### Alfred D. Noyes Children’s Center

The Alfred D. Noyes Children’s Center, located in Montgomery County, is a Department of Juvenile Services (DJS/the Department) owned and operated maximum security detention center for girls with a DJS-rated population capacity of 57. Black girls represented 67% of total entries during calendar years 2021 and 2022.

<b>Noyes – Selected Incident Categories</b>	<b>2020</b>	<b>2021</b>	<b>2022<sup>17</sup></b>
<b>Average Daily Population (ADP)</b>	<b>19</b>	<b>11</b>	<b>7</b>
1. Youth on Youth Assault/Fight	41	14	2
2. Alleged Youth on Staff Assault	11	11	5
3. Physical Restraint	126	36	32
4. Use of Handcuffs and/or Shackles	39	9	4
5. Seclusion	7	4	4
6. Contraband	9	9	3
7. Suicide Ideation	22	16	5
8. Suicide Attempt	0	0	0
9. Self-Injurious Behavior	36	16	4

Due to both facility conditions and staffing issues, detained girls were displaced several times throughout 2022.

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<sup>17</sup> Noyes was temporarily closed for approximately six months during 2022. Incident numbers were tabulated for the months that the facility was open.

Noyes was temporarily closed in early December 2021 and boys and girls housed at Noyes were moved to other DJS detention centers. DJS converted the facility to an all-girls detention center, and girls who would have been housed at the all-girls Waxter detention center in Laurel (which had an aged and deteriorating physical plant) were moved to Noyes on March 1, 2022.

In April of 2022, an air conditioner handler unit caught fire at the Noyes facility and girls were relocated to a unit at Cheltenham Youth Detention Center (CYDC) for boys until repairs could be made to the AC unit. The girls were transported back to the Noyes facility in June of 2022.

In mid-October of 2022, the Noyes facility for girls was again temporarily shuttered and detained girls awaiting adjudication and multiple staff from Noyes were transferred to Cheltenham, in order to increase staff availability at CYDC. At time of writing, detained girls remain on a residential unit at Cheltenham which has a total of 12 cells. When capacity is reached on the unit, newly detained girls are taken to Lower Easter Shore Detention Center in Salisbury, Maryland.

Girls in the juvenile justice system have different medical, reproductive health, mental health, and trauma-related needs than boys. As long as the state continues to incarcerate girls<sup>18</sup>, they deserve adequate space, services and a setting that is tailored to meet their particular circumstances. Relegating detained girls to a unit at a detention facility for boys due to the Department's failure to proactively address problems with retaining and recruiting staff (to the point that staffing levels reached a crisis point) indicates a disregard of the well-being of girls in their custody. As one Noyes staffer commented, "they just treat these girls like chattel, moving them constantly from one place to another without thinking of how it will impact them."

Having more than one unit for girls at Noyes also allowed staff to better manage group dynamics and assisted with quarantining newly admitted and COVID-19 positive youth. Girls' academic performance was also demonstrably better when they had their own school at Noyes with a dedicated cadre of teachers and principal to provide individualized attention; academic gains eroded when girls were moved to Cheltenham (twice) in 2022.

Noyes should be re-opened to accommodate the needs of detained girls. The reopened facility should have a long-planned kitchen added as there is no in-house kitchen there and food services were provided by an outside vendor. There were also long-standing issues and complaints concerning both the quality and quantity of meals that were not comprehensively addressed by DJS leadership. As a temporary measure (if Noyes is reopened), the Department could contract with a vendor that will deliver quality meals consistently (unlike the prior vendor).

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<sup>18</sup> Some states and jurisdictions have committed to ending the incarceration of girls by devoting resources to community-based interventions, supports, and programs that can better serve the needs of young people. See Dholakia, Nazish and Rosenthal, Lindsay (October 4, 2022), "Hawai'i is so Close to Ending the Incarceration of Young Girls, Vera Institute of Justice, available at: [Hawai'i Is So Close to Ending the Incarceration of Young Girls | Vera Institute](#)

### Lower Eastern Shore Children's Center

The Lower Eastern Shore Children's Center (LESCC) is a hardware secure detention center located in Salisbury. LESCC is owned and operated by the Maryland Department of Juvenile Services (DJS/the Department) and has a DJS-rated housing capacity of 24 youth. Black youth represented 80% of entries during calendar year 2022 and 79% in calendar year 2021.

LESCC – Selected Incident Categories	2020	2021	2022
<b>Average Daily Population (ADP)</b>	<b>12</b>	<b>13</b>	<b>18</b>
1. Youth on Youth Assault/Fight	17	30	49
2. Alleged Youth on Staff Assault	2	5	11
3. Physical Restraint	79	69	170
4. Use of Handcuffs and/or Shackles	0	1	2
5. Seclusion	1	1	18
6. Contraband	6	7	8
7. Suicide Ideation	7	13	25
8. Suicide Attempt	0	0	0
9. Self-Injurious Behavior	7	3	3

The average daily population at LESCC increased by 38% in calendar year 2022 when compared to 2021.

During the same time period:

- Youth fights and assaults increased by 63%.
- Physical restraints of youth by staff surged 146%.

- Use of seclusion also increased substantially (from 1 instance in 2021 to 18 instances in 2022).
- Incidents involving suicide ideation increased by 92%.
- Use of mechanical restraints (handcuffs and/or leg irons) inside the facility also increased as did incidents involving contraband.

Incidents were sharply elevated during the third and fourth quarters of 2022 at LESCC and administrators and staff faced difficulties in managing the youth dynamics.

### **Youth Safety**

In Incident 172461, a non-certified recreation staff person who was not authorized to perform physical restraints attempted to subdue an agitated youth by placing his arm around the youth's neck for over 7 minutes. The incident was investigated by the Department's Internal Investigation Unit (Office of Inspector General [OIG]). Despite camera footage showing the staffer placing and keeping the youth in a chokehold, some other staffers involved in the incident denied seeing the staffer place the child in a chokehold and reported to investigators that excessive or inappropriate force was not used during the incident.

The youth reported to investigators that the staffer "had his arm around his neck and it was hard for him to breathe". The youth also stated that "every time he said something, [the staffer] would squeeze his neck tighter" and that he remembered stating "I can't breathe". The youth reported that the staffer replied, "If you can talk then you can breathe." The youth reported that he was eventually let up after the staffer was instructed to let him go. [The youth] admitted that he immediately went after [the staffer] and attempted to assault him, but he missed. [The youth] stated the staffer then "squared up" and the other staff grabbed [the staffer] and told him to leave."

After the staffer released his hold on the youth and tried to walk away, camera footage showed the youth trying to confront the staffer. The staffer then aggressively moved towards the youth and ultimately had to be pulled away and led off the unit by other staff.

A youth with significant mental health challenges was transferred from LESCC to Cheltenham Youth Detention Center because LESCC had difficulty managing the youth's behavior. The youth was transferred via secure transport (in handcuffs and leg irons). DJS policy requires youth to be searched before they leave a facility and upon arrival at a facility. When the youth arrived at Cheltenham from LESCC, he was searched for contraband and was found to have on his person an MP3 player and headphones, a heavy metal bracket, dice, and a phone charger with a cord (Incident 172600). Administrators at LESCC should ensure that search procedures are followed.

## **Activities**

Youth across all DJS-operated facilities, including LESCC, continually express the need for more structured activities, especially after school and during the weekends. Excessive downtime inside facilities can often lead to boredom, anxiety, and irritability and increase the likelihood of acting out behaviors. Keeping kids actively engaged in constructive endeavors such as art, music, and virtual and in-person classes focused on career development and courses in high-demand skilled trades can ease the stress and monotony of incarceration and provide youth with useful skills that they can continue to utilize when they are back in their home communities.

## **Education**

The Maryland State Department of Education (MSDE) was responsible for the delivery of instruction, resources and services for students in the schools within Department of Juvenile Services' (DJS) operated detention and placement facilities until June 28, 2022. Starting at the end of June, an independent Juvenile Services Education Program (JSEP) board focused solely on education in DJS facilities took over responsibility of education services with implementation and resource assistance from DJS.

Incarcerated students across all DJS facilities frequently request increased access to books and reading materials to help them cope. Unfortunately, library services and on-demand access to books that pique youth interest are extremely limited at DJS facilities.

The classroom smart boards at LESCC were broken and remained un-replaced throughout 2022.

For more information on education in DJS facilities, please see the JSEP section beginning on page 55.



## Western Maryland Children's Center

Western Maryland Children's Center (WMCC), located in Washington County, is a 24-bed maximum security detention center for boys owned and operated by the Maryland Department of Juvenile Services (DJS/the Department). Black youth represented 73% of total youth entries in 2022 compared to 65% of total entries in 2021. Hispanic/Latino youth accounted for 7% of total entries during calendar year 2022, an increase of 1% compared to 2021.

<b>WMCC – Selected Incident Categories</b>	<b>2020</b>	<b>2021</b>	<b>2022</b>
<b>Average Daily Population (ADP)</b>	<b>16</b>	<b>11</b>	<b>15</b>
1. Youth on Youth Assault/Fight	35	25	41
2. Alleged Youth on Staff Assault	1	3	13
3. Physical Restraint	57	76	149
4. Use of Handcuffs and/or Shackles	6	14	35
5. Seclusion	1	5	26
6. Contraband	5	1	3
7. Suicide Ideation	4	0	10
8. Suicide Attempt	0	0	0
9. Self-Injurious Behavior	0	0	1

The average daily population at WMCC increased by 36% in calendar year 2022 when compared to 2021.

During the same time period:

- Youth fights and assaults increased by 63%.
- Physical restraints of youth by staff increased by 96%.

- Use of seclusion went up more than fivefold.
- Incidents involving suicide ideation increased very substantially. (There were 0 incidents of suicide ideation in 2021 compared to 10 incidents in 2022.)
- Use of mechanical restraints (handcuffs and/or leg irons) inside the facility increased 150%.

Vacancies for a case manager, case manager supervisor, and behavioral health clinician should be filled to ensure youth services are not disrupted. In addition, there should be a staffed post at the entrance of the facility to check visitors and staff in upon arrival, and administrative offices located in the entrance lobby area should be locked for safety and security reasons.

Persistent boredom and lack of engaging activities are common concerns among all youth in DJS-operated facilities including WMCC. Efforts to recruit community volunteers to provide programming options are hampered by a protracted vetting process (which can take two months or longer) and onerous COVID-19 requirements which require volunteers to provide DJS with weekly PCR test results. A community volunteer who conducted an in-person commercial driver's license (CDL) course to youth at WMCC could no longer get free testing at his local community COVID-19 testing site and was not able to continue offering his course. Administrators at DJS Headquarters should prioritize the availability of appropriate in-person activities for incarcerated youth and remove overly bureaucratic obstacles to community partnerships which can enhance services inside facilities to help keep youth constructively engaged. In addition, greater efforts should be made to recruit community volunteers.

For more information on education in DJS facilities, see the JSEP section of this report which begins on page 55.

# COMMITTED PLACEMENT CENTERS

## Victor Cullen Center

The Victor Cullen Center (Cullen), in Frederick County, is a hardware secure (locked and fenced) committed placement center owned and operated by the Maryland Department of Juvenile Services (DJS/the Department). The DJS-rated housing capacity is 48 boys. Black youth represented 83% of total entries in 2022 compared to 66% of total entries in 2021. Hispanic/Latino youth accounted for 10% of total entries in 2022 compared to 12% in 2021.

<b>Victor Cullen – Selected Incident Categories</b>	<b>2020</b>	<b>2021</b>	<b>2022</b>
<b>Average Daily Population (ADP)</b>	<b>13</b>	<b>12</b>	<b>16</b>
1. Youth on Youth Assault/Fight	24	15	28
2. Alleged Youth on Staff Assault	16	5	4
3. Physical Restraint	86	47	38
4. Use of Handcuffs and/or Shackles	49	30	9
5. Seclusion	23	7	1
6. Contraband	12	1	7
7. Suicide Ideation	0	3	1
8. Suicide Attempt	0	0	0
9. Self-Injurious Behavior	1	4	1

The average daily population at Cullen increased by 33% in calendar year 2022 when compared to 2021.

During the same time period:

- Youth fights and assaults increased by 87%.

- Incidents involving contraband also increased.
- ✓ Physical restraints of youth decreased by 19%.
- ✓ Use of seclusion decreased substantially (from 7 instances in 2021 to 1 instance in 2022).
- ✓ Use of mechanical restraints (handcuffs and/or leg irons) inside the facility decreased by 70%.
- ✓ Incidents of suicide ideation and self-injurious behavior decreased. There was one instance of suicide ideation and one instance of self-injurious behavior throughout 2022.

### **Girls at Cullen**

In mid-October of 2022, the Noyes facility for girls was temporarily closed and detained girls awaiting adjudication and multiple staff from Noyes were transferred to Cheltenham in order to increase staff availability at Cheltenham. The Department plans for the facilities to remain combined until staffing issues are stabilized at Cheltenham.

Some girls who were temporary detained at Noyes while awaiting court-ordered placement at a hardware secure facility were moved from Noyes in Rockville, Montgomery County, and sent to Cullen, which is near Sabillasville (population 354) in a rural part of Frederick County in western Maryland. The Department scrambled to stand up a new program at Cullen for the placed girls in a matter of days. Staff at Cullen received only two 6-hour training sessions and these sessions were led by detention center personnel even as the girls were ostensibly being transported to a treatment program. An assistant superintendent at Cullen was given the responsibility of running the girls' program and serving as the girls' case manager while continuing to attend to the needs of boys at the facility. She was also consistently subjected to being drafted into coverage to help line staff at the facility which is suffering from an ongoing severe staffing shortage.

At time of writing (February 2023), the girls' unit still lacks a dedicated case manager and there is still not a full-time on-site mental health therapist specifically assigned to the girls' program. Staff consistency and stability on the unit where the girls are housed are lacking due to the general staffing shortages further exacerbated by staff call-outs throughout the facility - some number of whichever staff show up to work on a given day are placed on the unit with the girls instead of the program having a designated cadre of dedicated staff who have expertise, experience and skills in working with girls and are able to provide the needed structure, boundaries and consistency to foster a safe environment.

Incident 172484 illustrates the problems with the lack of consistency. A girl who was trying to comfort another girl on medical isolation due to a COVID-19 infection by standing outside the sick girl's room and talking to her was given a disciplinary report by staff for not following COVID-19 distancing protocols. A few days later, another staff person placed a chair outside the sick girl's door so that the two friends could converse with each other.

Cullen is not able to provide the needed services, supports, resources and opportunities that girls need to overcome their challenges and thrive. Although Cullen is labeled as a treatment center, the girls who end up there maintain that they received better therapeutic care and more individualized attention while stuck in detention facilities. Monitoring observations and interviews confirm their opinion. A highly vulnerable neurodiverse girl with significant behavioral issues was provided with a 1:1 staffer while detained at the Noyes facility (before being sent to Cullen). Carefully chosen staffers worked with the girl on a rotating basis throughout waking hours to help keep her stabilized while detained at Noyes. Administrators at Cullen have refused to provide such an accommodation.

Another youth at Cullen was a high school graduate who had continuous concerns about the lack of job programs or post-secondary education opportunities while at the facility and reported frequent boredom. While she expressed interest in attending online courses to learn skills to be an administrative assistant, her class enrollment fell through for the beginning of the semester. She often got agitated while sitting in high school classes during the school day and would request a walk as allowed per her guided care plan developed for her by mental health professionals in conjunction with custody staff. In many instances though, there was no staffer available to take her for a walk which frustrated the girl even more. However, while in secure detention, she had more consistent access to staff who could escort her outside the school environment to help her self-regulate her feelings of boredom and frustration.

The same girl is mother to a toddler son, but because Cullen is located so very far from the youth's home on Maryland's eastern shore, she has only met with her baby in person a handful of times during her placement at the remote western Maryland facility.

The girl was eventually ejected from the program, and as she was leaving the facility, the youth "reached into her sock and retrieved a vape pen and said, "I might as well give you the vape you guys have been looking for." The youth also had a vape charger attached to the pen. A supervisor asked the youth who had provided her with the vape pen and the youth said, "Your staff." (Incident 172621). In addition to an investigation into contraband at the Cullen, facility staff were also investigated for allegedly passing notes between female and male youth.

A high school graduation celebration should have been but was never organized for the ejected girl during her roughly two-month tenure at Cullen. Only after she was ejected from Cullen and sent back to a DJS secure detention facility was a ceremony organized for her. Her loved ones, including her baby son, were able to attend the event which was organized by education personnel and facility administrators at the detention center.

If the state of Maryland and the Department continues to remain wedded to incarcerating girls who have trauma and abuse in their past and who evidence high mental and behavioral health-related needs, it is essential that the girls have their own residential site close to community resources and services and that an effective, experienced leader be hired to run the program. The potential leader must be adept at running gender-responsive and trauma-informed programs and be capable of building positive relationships with both the girls in custody and the staff who are responsible for their wellbeing so that a strong treatment environment can be established and maintained.

## **Lack of Programming**

Persistent boredom and a dearth of meaningful programming is prevalent across all DJS-operated facilities, and both girls and boys at Cullen report wanting more engaging activities and programming at the facility to keep them occupied. Recreation staff are often delayed in setting up recreation services and rely on direct-care staff to conduct recreation with the youth. Due to the punitive and compliance-oriented nature of the programming at DJS placement sites, youth are often threatened with disciplinary reports for failing to follow rules while administrators and staff ignore their responsibility to address the inadequate programming and services which is directly related to routine noncompliance.

One girl reported during the quarter that she wanted to go in her cell and lie down instead of staying in the dayroom because she was bored. Instead of formulating an engaging activity for the youth to partake in, staff threatened her with a disciplinary report for not following orders to stay in the unit dayroom. High school graduates were also threatened with disciplinary reports for not attending high school classes which they do not need or benefit from as graduates. Facility administrators, school authorities and DJS headquarters staff must work together to arrange individualized post-secondary education or vocational plans for the graduate students that keep them engaged for the entirety of the school day.

A very popular and constructive weekend activity called Reflections was held at Cullen during the fourth quarter of 2022 and it was a highlight of an otherwise monotonous activity schedule. Such engaging events should be offered routinely, especially during after-school and weekend hours. Cullen should explore ways to accommodate youths' expressed interest in music production, arts, and in instructor-led course work in trades such as barbering and cosmetology. Increasing the frequency of structured activities that appeal to youth interests and networking to form partnerships with local individuals and organizations to develop and provide services to incarcerated young people at DJS facilities including Cullen. Such an approach could improve facility climate, reduce incidents arising from boredom, and help youth normalization by affording opportunities to cultivate positive connections and develop new skills that can assist them upon release.

## **Education**

The Juvenile Services Education Program (JSEP) is responsible for education services in DJS facilities, including Victor Cullen.

Emphasis should be placed on improving the school climate at Cullen. Some students reported that a teacher called them "criminals" and that they felt unwelcome in that teacher's classroom. At other times during monitoring visits another teacher was observed discussing personal relationship issues with kids during instruction time rather than teaching a lesson.

Cullen has a severe teacher shortage including vacancies for two special education teachers and a resource teacher. At times during the fourth quarter of 2022, teacher shortages resulted in school being abruptly cancelled by the school principal, sometimes with little or no

notice given to the Cullen custody staff administration and resulting in a scramble by the custody staff to try to find something to keep kids occupied during what would have been school time as well as remainder of the day.

Students studying for the GED need and have requested more access to software programs and study materials during weekend and after-school hours to help them prepare for the test. GED testing sites across the JSEP system should also be expanded to Cullen as currently students have to wait for availability and then be transported in shackles by secure van to the Hickey detention center in Baltimore County to take the GED test. In addition, youth across all DJS facilities, including Cullen, frequently request increased access to books and reading materials to help them cope. Unfortunately, library services and on-demand access to books that pique youth interest were extremely limited at DJS facilities throughout 2022.

High school graduates at Cullen have limited options for post-secondary education. Youth may enroll in online community college courses if their time in placement aligns with the beginning of an academic semester. There are no opportunities for youth to take part in long-term career and technical education courses or in practical, hands-on job readiness programs that lead to sustainable employment in the community. A modest DJS initiative called World of Work was popular among young high school graduates. Youth were able to earn minimum wage which could be put toward restitution and post-release living costs for performing odd jobs around the facility. The initiative has been permanently discontinued. Access to a robust array of job training and job readiness resources leading to meaningful employment in the community should be made available at all DJS placement sites, including Cullen.<sup>19</sup>

For more information on education in DJS facilities, see the JSEP section of this report which begins on page 55.

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<sup>19</sup> See “Working for a Better Future.” Justice Policy Institute (2012). Available at: [https://justicepolicy.org/wp-content/uploads/justicepolicy/documents/working\\_for\\_a\\_better\\_future.pdf](https://justicepolicy.org/wp-content/uploads/justicepolicy/documents/working_for_a_better_future.pdf)

See also, “On Track: How Well are States Preparing Youth in the Juvenile Justice System for Employment?” (September 2019) The Council of State Governments Justice Center and the National Reentry Resource Center. Available at: <https://csgjusticecenter.org/publications/on-track-how-well-are-states-preparing-youth-in-the-juvenile-justice-system-for-employment/>



### Garrett Children's Center (formerly Savage Mountain Youth Center)

The Garrett Children's Center (GCC), located in rural Garrett County, is a Department of Juvenile Services (DJS/the Department) owned and operated hardware secure (locked and fenced) committed placement center for boys with a DJS-rated capacity of 24.

Garret Children's Center	2020	2021	2022
<b>Average Daily Population (ADP)</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>N/A</b>	
1. Youth on Youth Assault/Fight	6	N/A	
2. Alleged Youth on Staff Assault	8	N/A	
3. Physical Restraint	43	N/A	
4. Use of Handcuffs and/or Shackles	21	N/A	
5. Seclusion	1	N/A	
6. Contraband	8	N/A	
7. Suicide Ideation	2	N/A	
8. Suicide Attempt	0	N/A	
9. Self-Injurious Behavior	0	N/A	

There were no youth placed at GCC in 2022, however staff are still employed there and work at the facility.

The state of Maryland spent close to \$6 million dollars to add fencing, locks and other security apparatus to convert the remotely located staff secure Savage Mountain Youth Center into a more prison-like hardware secure facility (renamed the Garrett Children's Center and pictured on the next page).



Garrett Children’s Center was fully operational for approximately two years (from December of 2018 to December of 2020) before it was wound down and finally closed to youth in 2021, following a COVID-19 outbreak at the facility. However, the facility still retains staff that report on-site, including teachers who provide online courses for those DJS schools that lack certified teachers in core content areas. Vacancies for superintendent and assistant superintendent positions at GCC were filled toward the end of 2022.

Continuing to invest in remote congregate care facilities is a flawed approach to youth justice as “consistently brutal conditions, stark racial disparities, dismal outcomes, and high costs have characterized youth prisons since their birth.”<sup>20</sup>

The significant fiscal and human resources spent on keeping the empty facility running would be more effectively spent on further increasing the availability of community-based programming for young people. As experts in juvenile justice have recognized, “youth incarceration has several negative outcomes, including association with more delinquent peers and increased criminal behavior and recidivism. Closing underutilized juvenile correctional facilities and reinvesting the savings into evidence-based programs and services keeps young people out of the system, in school, and connected to their families.”<sup>21</sup>

For information on education-related issues in DJS facilities, see the JSEP section that begins on page 55.

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<sup>20</sup> Schiraldi, Vincent (June 2020), Can We Eliminate the Youth Prison? And What Should We Replace it With?, Executive Session of the Future of Justice Policy, The Square One Project, available at [Can We Eliminate the Youth Prison? \(And What Should We Replace It With\)? | By Vincent Schiraldi \(June 2020\) - Square One Project \(squareonejustice.org\)](https://squareonejustice.org)

<sup>21</sup> Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention (OJJDP), OJJDP Priorities, available at [OJJDP Priorities | Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention \(ojp.gov\)](https://www.ojjdp.gov/priorities)

## Youth Centers x2

The youth centers, located in remote western Maryland, consist of two separate staff secure (not fenced and locked) facilities for boys. Both centers are owned and operated by the Maryland Department of Juvenile Services (DJS/the Department). The facilities are Green Ridge (40 beds) and Backbone Mountain (48 beds). Black youth represented 86% of total youth entries in 2022 compared to 77% of total youth entries in 2021. Hispanic/Latino youth represented 10% of total youth entries in both 2021 and 2022.

<b>Combined Youth Centers (x2) – Selected Incident Categories</b>	<b>2020</b>	<b>2021</b>	<b>2022</b>
<b>Average Daily Population (ADP)</b>	<b>36</b>	<b>27</b>	<b>43</b>
1. Youth on Youth Assault/Fight	59	26	57
2. Alleged Youth on Staff Assault	18	14	23
3. Physical Restraint	176	174	196
4. Use of Handcuffs and/or Shackles	45	40	34
5. Seclusion	0	0	1
6. Contraband	38	11	14
7. Suicide Ideation	19	4	21
8. Suicide Attempt	0	0	0
9. Self-Injurious Behavior	0	1	1

The average daily population at the youth centers increased by 59% in calendar year 2022 when compared to 2021.

During the same time period:



- Youth fights and assaults increased by 120%.
- Physical restraints of youth by staff increased by 12%.
- Incidents involving suicide ideation increased substantially (four incidents of suicide ideation in 2021 compared to 21 incidents in 2022).

Use of mechanical restraints (handcuffs and/or leg irons) inside the facilities decreased by 15%.

### **Constructive Activities**

Persistent boredom and a dearth of meaningful programming are prevalent across all DJS-operated facilities, including the youth centers, and boys report wanting more engaging programming to keep them occupied. While the DJS youth center placements in rural western Maryland were ostensibly created to offer outdoor experiential learning opportunities for young people, in practice, access to the use of the natural surroundings for therapeutic or recreational purposes has always been strictly limited. The Department should facilitate more outdoor enrichment and recreation activities in the nature preserves, parks, and trails near the two youth centers. DJS should also provide more structured activities to keep youth engaged on-site during after school and evening hours. Youth also frequently ask for access to more books and reading materials to help them cope with incarceration and pass their time productively. Unfortunately, library services and on-demand access to books that pique youth interest have always been extremely limited at DJS facilities and continued to be so during 2022.

Existing programming such as an off-campus outdoor experiential weekend called Reflections should be available to more incarcerated youth (including to detention center youth) and should also be offered more frequently. In addition, the Reflections program should be held on or near each facility to allow for times when youth cannot travel to the current site utilized for the activity.

### **Education**

The Maryland State Department of Education (MSDE) was responsible for the delivery of instruction, resources and services for students in the schools within Department of Juvenile Services' (DJS) operated detention and placement facilities until June 28, 2022. Starting at the end of June, an independent Juvenile Services Education Program (JSEP) Board focused solely on education in DJS facilities took over responsibility for education services inside DJS facilities, with implementation and resource assistance from DJS.

The school culture at Green Ridge needs improvement. Students at that facility report that some teachers are not supportive and use the threat of point loss and disciplinary reports (which can lead to extended length of stays based on the Department's behavior management system) to harass and agitate them.

There are no opportunities for youth to take part in long-term career and technical education courses or in practical, hands-on job readiness programs that lead to sustainable employment in the community. A modest DJS initiative called World of Work was popular among young high school graduates. Youth were able to earn minimum wage for performing odd jobs inside each facility and the money earned could be put toward restitution and post-release living costs. The initiative has been permanently discontinued.

Eligible high school graduates at Backbone who have lengths of stay that correspond to the beginning of a college semester can attend Garrett Community College. However, there is an overabundance of idle time on days when the graduates don't have college courses to occupy a part of their day. Youth often play video games or clean during school hours to help pass the time. More opportunities should be made available to help them occupy their time productively.

Access to a robust array of job training and job readiness resources leading to meaningful employment in the community should be made available at all DJS placement sites, including the youth centers.<sup>22</sup> Youth in placement should also have the opportunity to volunteer, work, intern and recreate in nearby communities to help them normalize and gain valuable skills. This approach would also mitigate the inherent harms of incarceration which "hinders the process of desisting from delinquency by disrupting young people's opportunities to learn, grow, and participate in essential rites of passage associated with adolescent development".<sup>23</sup>

For more information on education in DJS facilities, see the JSEP section of this report which begins on page 55.

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<sup>22</sup> See "Working for a Better Future." Justice Policy Institute (2012). Available at: [https://justicepolicy.org/wp-content/uploads/justicepolicy/documents/working\\_for\\_a\\_better\\_future.pdf](https://justicepolicy.org/wp-content/uploads/justicepolicy/documents/working_for_a_better_future.pdf)

See also, "On Track: How Well are States Preparing Youth in the Juvenile Justice System for Employment?" (September 2019) The Council of State Governments Justice Center and the National Reentry Resource Center. Available at: <https://csgjusticecenter.org/publications/on-track-how-well-are-states-preparing-youth-in-the-juvenile-justice-system-for-employment/>

<sup>23</sup> Mendel, Richard (March 2023), "Why Incarceration Fails: An Updated Review of the Evidence: Executive Summary", The Sentencing Project, available at: [Why Youth Incarceration Fails: An Updated Review of the Evidence – The Sentencing Project](#)

## Silver Oak Academy

Silver Oak Academy (SOA/Silver Oak), located in Carroll County, is a privately-operated staff secure (not locked and fenced) committed placement center licensed by the Department of Juvenile Services (DJS/the Department) to house up to 96 boys. Black youth represented 92% of entries to SOA through DJS during 2022 and 83% of entries in 2021. There were no youth placed at Silver Oak during the third and fourth quarters of 2022.

SOA – Selected Incident Categories	2020	2021	2022
<b>Average Daily Population (ADP)</b>	<b>33<sup>24</sup></b>	<b>14</b>	<b>11<sup>25</sup></b>
1. Youth on Youth Assault/Fight	28	51	11
2. Alleged Youth on Staff Assault	5	8	3
3. Physical Restraint	30	38	13
4. Use of Handcuffs and/or Shackles	0	0	0
5. Seclusion	0	0	0
6. Contraband	8	9	3
7. Suicide Ideation	0	1	2
8. Suicide Attempt	0	0	0
9. Self-Injurious Behavior	1	1	0

Due to ongoing concerns about youth safety in the program, staff supervision issues, and problems within the education department at Silver Oak, all residential youth placed through DJS were removed from the program in May of 2022, and new admissions to the program through DJS have halted. The facility served a small number of day students from surrounding areas during the remainder of 2022.

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<sup>24</sup> There were no young people placed at Silver Oak through DJS in the third and fourth quarters of 2020. The average daily population in 2020 and incident numbers were derived from youth placed at Silver Oak through DJS during the first and second quarters of 2020.

<sup>25</sup> There were no young people placed at Silver Oak through DJS in the third and fourth quarters of 2022. The average daily population in 2022 and incident numbers were derived from youth placed at Silver Oak through DJS during the first and second quarters of 2022.

## Mountain View

Mountain View was a staff secure committed placement center for girls that opened in June 2020. The facility was in remote western Maryland and consisted of a single structure housing a living unit (upstairs) and school room (downstairs) on the grounds of Backbone Mountain Youth Center for boys. The dormitory style living unit housed up to six girls. Mountain View was owned and operated by the Maryland Department of Juvenile Services (DJS/the Department). There was an outbreak of COVID-19 at Mountain View that began in mid-December. Two girls placed at Mountain View in December 2021 were nearing the end of their time in placement and were released home. Mountain View was not regarded as a successful program and was permanently closed in 2022.

As of October of 2022, committed girls are now placed at the Victor Cullen Center, a remotely located hardware secure (locked and fenced) placement center for boys in Frederick County. Girls are housed in one of the living units at the facility and sleep in individual cells.

Mountain View was not able to establish a therapeutic culture, and lack of staff expertise in treating the unique needs of girls in the juvenile justice system in addition to boundaries issues were ongoing issues at the facility.<sup>26</sup> These issues also plague the even more slapdash current DJS-operated “program” for girls at Cullen (see the Cullen section, pages 38 to 42).

Recognizing the inherent harm that incarceration poses to young people and the beneficial impact that well-designed community programs can have on positive youth outcomes, some states and jurisdictions are moving toward ending the incarceration in correctional institutions and expanding capacity for community-based interventions for girls that are better equipped to provide the services and resources to meet their needs.<sup>27</sup> As one juvenile justice researcher notes, “girls experiencing trafficking, homelessness, and other crises don't need a locked facility—or the threat of a locked facility. What they need is connection to meaningful supports, programming, and economic stability, and places where young people can feel safe and heard—where they can build relationships.”<sup>28</sup>

If the State of Maryland and the Department of Juvenile Services remain wedded to the practice of incarcerating girls with histories of abuse and trauma and evidencing high mental and

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<sup>26</sup> See JJMU 2021 First Quarter Report, pages 16-20, available at:

[https://www.marylandattorneygeneral.gov/JJM%20Documents/21\\_Quarter1.pdf](https://www.marylandattorneygeneral.gov/JJM%20Documents/21_Quarter1.pdf)

JJMU 2021 Second Quarter Report, pages 15 and 16, available at:

[https://www.marylandattorneygeneral.gov/JJM%20Documents/21\\_Quarter2.pdf](https://www.marylandattorneygeneral.gov/JJM%20Documents/21_Quarter2.pdf)

JJMU 2021 Third Quarter Report, pages 17 and 18, available at:

[https://www.marylandattorneygeneral.gov/JJM%20Documents/21\\_Quarter3.pdf](https://www.marylandattorneygeneral.gov/JJM%20Documents/21_Quarter3.pdf)

JJMU 2021 Fourth Quarter and Annual Report, page 46 and 47, available at:

[https://www.marylandattorneygeneral.gov/JJM%20Documents/2021\\_Annual\\_Report.pdf](https://www.marylandattorneygeneral.gov/JJM%20Documents/2021_Annual_Report.pdf)

<sup>27</sup> Dholakia, Nazish and Rosenthal, Lindsay (October 4, 2022), “Hawai'i is so Close to Ending the Incarceration of Young Girls”, Vera Institute of Justice, available at: [Hawai'i Is So Close to Ending the Incarceration of Young Girls | Vera Institute](https://www.verainstitute.org/hawaii-is-so-close-to-ending-the-incarceration-of-young-girls)

<sup>28</sup> Ibid.



behavioral health-related needs, it is essential that the girls have their own residential site close to community resources and services and that an effective, experienced leader be hired to run the program. The potential administrator should have demonstrated success in running gender-responsive and trauma-informed programs and be capable of building positive relationships with both girls and staff and establishing a strong treatment environment.

## **SMALLER FACILITY UPDATES**

## **SMALLER FACILITY UPDATES**

### **Morning Star Youth Academy**

Morning Star Youth Academy is a staff secure (not locked or fenced) committed placement center on Maryland's eastern shore. The facility is operated by VisionQuest, Inc., and is licensed by DJS to house up to 24 youth.

Morning Star utilizes the trauma-informed Sanctuary model. Therapeutic services are provided onsite and treatment services are supplemented by clinicians from community mental health organizations. Youth at Morning Star occasionally participate in volunteer and recreation activities in the community.

Morning Star needs to upgrade the facility physical plant. Long needed and overdue improvements include installing a heating and cooling system in the workout room so that youth can utilize the area during both colder and warmer months. There is also a need to permanently fix the gym roof (which leaks) to conduct routine maintenance to ensure that the premises is consistently free of debris.

Morningstar has had ongoing issues with inadequate youth supervision resulting in drugs and other prohibited items being smuggled into the facility. There were several incidents during the fourth quarter of 2022 where contraband (including vape pens and cell phones) was found in youth living areas (Incidents 171956, 171998, 172233, 172312, and 172632). When a youth was questioned about having a vape pen, the youth said that he had been in possession of the item "for a while" (Incident 171956).

A well-regarded on-site equine therapeutic program has not been consistently offered due to staff availability and other issues. This programming constituted an important part of the treatment services available at Morningstar and should be reinstated and be regularly available to youth at Morningstar.

### **One Love Group Home**

One Love Group Home (One Love) is an 8-bed group home in Baltimore City operated by Building Communities Today for Tomorrow, Inc. The home is licensed by and receives referrals from DJS and began receiving referrals to house youth involved with the Maryland Department of Human Resources during the second quarter of 2022.

One Love partners with community-based organizations to provide therapeutic, education, employment and enrichment opportunities for youth while they reside in a home-like environment. Students are enrolled in local schools to work toward completing their high school diplomas.

One Love struggled to provide appropriate structure, supervision, and services to keep kids engaged in (and motivated to complete) the program during 2022. All three young people placed at One Love through DJS during the fourth quarter of 2022 ran away from the group home.

To improve program services for adjudicated youth placed at One Love, administrators should consider:

- Enhancing the existing programmatic structure and boosting supervision at the group home to help prevent AWOLs and theft inside the home (which was also an issue during 2022).

- Hiring a full-time mental health clinician to reside at the home during waking hours so that youth have regular access to a professional clinical resource.

- Developing and updating a recreation and enrichment schedule on a weekly basis that includes robust offerings to keep kids constructively occupied during after-school periods and on weekends.

- Installing cameras in common living areas and also installing exterior facing security cameras.

- Tackling and removing obstacles to enrolling kids in local schools and therapeutic services in a timely manner. One youth who ran away during the fourth quarter of 2022 was at the group home for over three weeks and had not been enrolled in a local high school. Another runaway with a trauma history was at the home for over two months before he was linked up with a mental health therapist in the surrounding community.

At time of writing (February of 2022), there are no youth placed at One Love through DJS.

# **JUVENILE SERVICES EDUCATION PROGRAM**

## JUVENILE SERVICES EDUCATION PROGRAM

The Maryland State Department of Education (MSDE) was responsible for the delivery of instruction, resources and services for students in the schools within Department of Juvenile Services' (DJS) operated detention and placement facilities until June 28, 2022. Starting at the end of June, an independent Juvenile Services Education Program (JSEP) Board focused solely on education in DJS facilities took over responsibility for education services inside DJS facilities with implementation and resource assistance from DJS. The Board selected a superintendent to oversee school operations and the superintendent is in the process of hiring additional staff and (together with board members) developing policies and procedures for the Juvenile Services Education Program (JSEP).<sup>29</sup>

Below are ten overarching issues that need to be addressed as they impact the student experience within JSEP schools.

### 1. Fill vacancies.

JSEP schools have a high number of vacancies and students attend virtual lessons for classes for which there is no certified instructor available at the school. Below is a list of vacancies by school at time of writing (March 2022):

Backbone vacancies - One vacancy in process.

BCJJC vacancies - One counselor position, five instructional and one office vacancy (one counselor position and one instructional position are in process of recruitment).

Cheltenham vacancies - five instructional positions and one counselor position.

Garrett vacancies - one instructional vacancy.

Hickey vacancies - two school office positions, four instructional positions and one counselor (one instructional position, one office staff position and one guidance position are in process).

LESCE vacancies – one instructional vacancy.

Noyes vacancies - one counselor, six instructional vacancies (one instructional position is scheduled to be filled by the end of March of 2023).

Cullen vacancies - four instructional vacancies (one scheduled to be filled by the end of March of 2023).

WMCC vacancies – there are no vacant positions at WMCC.

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<sup>29</sup> See [Juvenile Services Education Program \(JSEP\) and Board \(maryland.gov\)](#)

Green Ridge vacancies – there are no vacant positions at Green Ridge.

Hiring should be prioritized in order to privilege in-person instruction, and remote learning should only be utilized as a last resort and only when absolutely necessary. According to public health and education experts, “reduced access to in-person learning is associated with poorer learning outcomes and adverse mental health and behavioral effects in children.”<sup>30</sup>

2. Enhance Library services.

Youth frequently request reading materials in a wide range of genres which appeal to their interests to keep them constructively occupied yet library services up until now have been limited across JSEP schools. Book collections in facility libraries should be expanded and youth should be afforded regular access to their respective library to check out reading materials. Plans by JSEP to provide youth with access to check out eBooks and audiobooks through library apps should be effectuated.

3. Increase access to General Educational Development Test (GED) preparation programs and expand GED testing sites.

Some youth who express interest in taking the GED test report that they are not provided with tailored support in their high school classes to help them prepare for and pass the test. In addition, there is only one testing site (at the Hickey detention center in Baltimore County) for use by youth in hardware secure placement and detention centers around the state. GED test-eligible students at other hardware secure sites must wait for space to open at Hickey or for a mobile testing lab to come to their school before they can take the test. It should be noted that transportation to and from the Hickey facility to take the GED examination is made utilizing DJS secure transportation vans and personnel and the young people involved must endure being shackled in the back of a van for the (often hours long) ride in both directions. Some students have waited weeks to take the test and have been released from custody or have been sent away to placement without having had the opportunity to sit for the exam. Testing sites should be expanded with priority afforded to youth at the two largest detention centers (BCJJC and CYDC) and those at the hardware-secure Victor Cullen Center.

4. Expand Career and Technical Education (CTE) options to include hands-on short- and long-term courses in job specialties and skills that are in high demand among community employers, and allow youth to have jobs, internships, and apprenticeships

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<sup>30</sup> Oster E, Jack R, Halloran C, et al. Disparities in Learning Mode Access Among K-12 Students During the COVID-19 Pandemic by Race/Ethnicity, Geography, and Grade Level – United States, September 202 – April 2021. MMWR Morb. Mortal Wkly Rep 2021;70:953-958. Available at: [https://www.cdc.gov/mmwr/volumes/70/wr/mm7026e2.htm?s\\_cid=mm7026e2\\_w](https://www.cdc.gov/mmwr/volumes/70/wr/mm7026e2.htm?s_cid=mm7026e2_w)

while incarcerated. Youth should also be allowed to volunteer locally and participate in educational field trips in surrounding communities.

Youth with high school diplomas are still being required to sit in high school classes during the school day and they face disciplinary action (which affects access to incentives and impacts lengths of time for youth in placement) rather than being provided with comprehensive post-secondary programming.

5. Form community partnerships to bring programming to youth such as after-school clubs, academic enrichment and career readiness resources.
6. Continue efforts to expand Wi-Fi availability to all DJS (detention and placement) facility living units so that youth on quarantine can at least access virtual education. Ban the use of education-related “packets” in place of instruction.
7. Improve transition planning so that students do not face delays in being enrolled in community schools upon release and ensure that credits that students have earned while attending a JSEP school are transferred appropriately and accurately to their local school. Anecdotal evidence from youths’ attorneys indicates that many students leaving JSEP schools are facing obstacles while trying to enroll or reenroll in local schools and are also facing difficulties in having credits earned while incarcerated count toward achieving a high school diploma.
8. Begin a pilot program in placement sites to hold classes in JSEP schools by grade level rather than living unit with the goal of having all JSEP schools always operate classes by grade level.
9. Offer academic mentoring and tutoring to make up for learning loss during the pandemic and to supplement classroom instruction. A recent volunteer-led tutoring initiative to help eligible BCJJC students prepare for and pass the GED examination should be expanded to all DJS facility sites.
10. Improve school climate so that all students have a sense of belonging and of being supported (see Victor Cullen, page 38 and Youth Centers, page 46).



# **MARYLAND DEPARTMENT OF JUVENILE SERVICES - RESPONSE**



**DEPARTMENT OF JUVENILE SERVICES**  
**RESPONSE TO JJMU 2022 FOURTH QUARTER REPORT AND ANNUAL COMPENDIUM**

With the confirmation of Vincent N. Schiraldi as the Department of Juvenile Services' (DJS) new Secretary on February 21, 2023, DJS is pleased to share its first response to a Juvenile Justice Monitoring Unit (JJMU) report under the Administration of Governor Wes Moore and the leadership of Secretary Schiraldi.

Upon review of the JJMU 2022 Fourth Quarter Report and Annual Compendium, DJS provides the following response:

DJS does not take issue with many of the findings expressed in the JJMU report, and shares the concern that, despite improvements in some areas in recent years, conditions of confinement in DJS detention and commitment facilities are quite concerning and need to be improved substantially. This is true despite the hard work by committed and passionate DJS staff, who work every day with challenging youth under difficult circumstances. This dynamic was true before the onset of the Covid-19 Pandemic in March 2020, and has been made more difficult as DJS staff, its partners, young people and their families faced extraordinary and unprecedented challenges over the past three years in responding to the pandemic.

DJS also largely agrees with many of the findings by the JJMU, including related to the following:

- Research<sup>31</sup> shows that incarceration puts young people at risk for violence-related injuries and often creates and/or exacerbates underlying mental health and trauma-related conditions. DJS is particularly concerned that critical incidents in a number of categories increased in many DJS

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<sup>31</sup> See, Mendel, Richard A., *No Place for Kids: The Case for Reducing Juvenile Incarceration* (Annie E. Casey Foundation, Baltimore, Maryland, 2011); Bonnie, Richard, J., et al., *Reforming Juvenile Justice: A Developmental Approach* (The National Academics Press, Washington, DC 2013).

facilities in 2022. Specifically, DJS is very troubled by data showing increases in 2022 in a number of DJS facilities in incidences of:

- youth on youth fights and assaults;
- use of physical and mechanical restraints;
- use of seclusion;
- incidents of self-injurious behavior; and
- contraband inside DJS facilities.

DJS must and will work hard to address these issues.

- DJS should continue its work to shift from a mindset of punitive discipline, control and compliance prevalent across many DJS-facilities to an emphasis on creating programs in which staff receive high quality and effective training and support to ensure youth have access to nurturing relationships and abundantly available services, supports, and opportunities to foster skill building, growth, healing, and future success;
- DJS should assess operations and facility leadership to ensure an ability to both create and maintain a safe environment and provide engaging, relevant and culturally- and age-appropriate programming for youth;
- DJS should partner with local agencies and organizations to provide programming options for incarcerated youth with an emphasis on mentoring, education, employment, and enrichment services that can continue once a youth returns to the community;
- DJS should continue and enhance its efforts to recruit qualified staff with a passion for helping youth succeed and the experience, skills, and necessary temperament to effectively work with incarcerated young people;
- Further prioritize family contact by increasing opportunities for in-person and virtual family engagement and broaden the departmental definition of “family” so that it encompasses supportive individuals that may be outside of the immediate family circle;
- With our partners in the Juvenile Services Educational Program (JSEP), substantially improve educational programming within its facilities, including by enhancing after-school/weekend programming, library and media services, the availability of post-secondary education options and supports for high school graduates including the ability to attend college (off- and on-site) and the option to work, intern and volunteer both within the facility and in nearby communities;

- Assess employee morale, encourage staff input by conducting listening sessions and a presence at facilities by Department leadership, and provide mechanisms for staff feedback (including anonymously); and
- DJS will implement the Comprehensive Treatment Model (CTM) at the department’s treatment programs. The CTM uses Dialectical Behavior Therapy (DBT) as the foundational treatment framework, incorporates principles of Positive Youth Development (PYD) and trauma informed care. The focus is to align a youth’s recommended treatment hours, including possibly while in detention awaiting placement, with the youth’s risk for recidivism and treatment needs. The model also takes into account the youth’s unique strengths and challenges when creating an individualized treatment plan. The treatment program will continue to promote partnerships with the youth, family, and other stakeholders to support youth's treatment progress.

Moving forward, DJS is committed to achieving Governor Wes Moore’s goal of having the nation’s best youth services agency and, as he so aptly puts it, to “Leave No One Behind.” DJS leadership believes that by working hand-in-hand with Maryland’s youth, families, communities, and key stakeholders within and outside of the formal justice system, we can achieve Governor Moore’s goals.

It is also important to note that over the past decade, DJS has achieved impressive milestones during some very difficult times—including a global pandemic—through the work of its staff and in partnership with our partners. Two remarkable achievements over the past decade stand out—recidivism rates for DJS youth have declined by 10 percentage points while the number of youth in custody and on probation has declined by 67% and 75%, respectively. All of this has happened while juvenile complaints in Maryland overall had dropped, though we are very mindful of recent concerning increases in some youth crime categories during the pandemic. This significant decline in the number of youth in custody, simultaneous with the decline in recidivism and statewide crime, allowed DJS to close 5 facilities over the last 10 years, saving precious tax dollars and investing in more effective approaches to improve safety and outcomes for young people and our communities.

The Department’s progress in partnership with other key Maryland stakeholders has increased confidence in Maryland’s youth justice system. This included landmark legislation supported by the Hogan Administration and overwhelmingly passed by the Maryland General Assembly in 2022, in which the Department’s ability to increase access to diversion. The legislation also prohibited the use of detention for misdemeanor offenses and technical violations of probation, set length of probation guidelines and prohibited the use of out of home placements for youth adjudicated of misdemeanor offences or technical violations of probation. In the short time since that has been in effect since last June, the percentage of youth diverted has risen from 9% to 16%. DJS believes it can build on the successes seen under the previous administration.

Specifically, DJS intends to:

Moving forward, DJS will partner with the communities that are least resourced and most heavily impacted by the youth justice system in ways that are unprecedented for DJS or any other youth justice agency. It is critically important to recognize that the young people in our care come disproportionately from communities of color, particularly Black communities. In all of the Department's work, we will prioritize efforts to achieve fairness, equity, and decency in our system, which DJS firmly believes will lead to safer and stronger communities throughout Maryland.

Towards that end, we will enlist local communities in partnership with DJS to help change our young people's trajectory to one of hope and success. Together, we intend to find new ways to work with youth, families, and communities to improve outcomes for young people. This includes further reducing their recidivism rates, and also improving positive outcomes like educational attainment, workforce development, civic engagement, arts and athletics programming, and other positive youth development opportunities.

Though new leadership has only been in place for approximately 60 days, there have been several concrete steps that DJS has already taken to address findings in JJMU's current report. These include:

- The Department will implement the Comprehensive Treatment Model (CTM) at the department's treatment programs effective July 1, 2024. Over the past two years the Department has worked with national experts in the juvenile justice field to develop the CTM. Staff at the Department's treatment centers are in the final phases of training in Dialectical Behavior Therapy (DBT). To ensure successful implementation the Department established a multi-disciplinary team who developed and updated policy and created training materials for staff, youth, families and system stakeholders. Over the next few months, the Department is rolling out updated policies, providing additional training and designing new youth and family handbooks.
- The Juvenile Services Education Program (JSEP) has also partnered with the Department's Residential Operations staff to launch education by subject matter and grade level in our facilities, rather than by living unit. This will help improve educational progress of young people who will gain greater understanding of their subjects when being taught in a single-subject focused classroom (like they would in a school in the community), as opposed to a "one-room schoolhouse" where youth of various different grade levels are in the same room.
- DJS has restarted off-grounds trips and activities for young people in Backbone and Green Ridge and are carefully planning to do so for youth in Victor Cullen. Integrating off-ground trips and activities will be part of a larger effort to increase experiential education opportunities, engage youth in service learning, and to reduce idle time for our young people, all things that research shows will lead to more positive outcomes.

- DJS has initiated a full assessment by national experts of its detained and committed placement facilities, through a partnership with the federal Office of Juvenile Justice & Delinquency Prevention and the Council of Juvenile Justice Administrators.
- DJS leadership is opening satellite offices in its secure facilities, including by the Secretary in BCJJC and the Assistant Secretary & Chief of Staff in Cheltenham.
- DJS has made personnel changes to improve management of its facilities, including replacing the Deputy Secretary of Operations and the Superintendent of BCJCC.
- The Department’s vacancy rate has declined from 16% (1/23) to 14% (3/15) and our Resident Advisor vacancy rate has declined by a third from 18% (1/23) to 12% (3/15).

It is important to note, however, that while DJS believes the actions described above are steps that begin to address concerns raised by the JJMU, the larger and likely longer work ahead will involve significant culture change throughout the agency and in its facilities. This work will build on efforts in the past to shift from a corrections mindset to an approach grounded in the principles of positive youth development, recognizing that the agency has not made nearly as much progress in this area as is necessary to achieve the goals of Governor Moore and the Department’s new leadership. In DJS-operated facilities, this will include things like keeping youth productively occupied, receiving excellent educational programming, having their needs met in developmentally appropriate ways, and being viewed by staff and themselves as young people of promise and value.

Finally, DJS leadership believes there’s one tried and true method for assessing progress in working with youth and families in the justice system – the “my kid” test – which will be the agency’s bedrock metric moving forward. DJS will continue to ask if what we are doing in the Department’s facilities and in the community with other people’s children would be good enough for our own kids, and if so then it’s good enough for the children in our care. But unless and until it’s good enough for our own children who we love and care about, it’s not good enough for the children in the Department’s care—each and every one of whom is, after all, someone’s child.

More detailed responses to specific issues raised in the JJMU report is provided below:

### **COVID-19 Response in DJS Facilities**

#### **Clinical Services Response**

DJS facilities like other congregate care facilities are held to more conservative, risk adverse quarantine and medical isolation guidelines, and the CDC for such settings recommended a higher level of COVID prevention strategies compared to recommendations released for that of the general public. By carefully and strategically following such recommendations, along with continued consultations with Maryland

Department of Health and our Clinical Providers, the Department has shown success in minimizing the spread and exposures to all respiratory viruses and illnesses.

In the Fourth Quarter of 2022, there were 96 total confirmed cases of COVID-19 among DJS facility staff and 61 confirmed cases of COVID-19 among youth in DJS. The total confirmed cases trended a declined number similar to the community positivity rates in the State.

The updated CDC Guidance on Management of COVID-19 in Correctional and Detention Facilities was released on November 29, 2022. DJS continued to monitor COVID-19 Community Levels and facility-specific risks through March 1, 2023 to guide decisions about when to apply specific COVID-19 prevention actions, for the safety and benefit of DJS staff, youth and families.

DJS values JJMU's acknowledgement of the Department's efforts to protect youth and staff during the COVID-19 pandemic. After a careful review of the State of Maryland's current COVID positivity and mortality rates, along with the number of cases in DJS over the past 90 days, the Department initiated a phase out of weekly testing for staff (employees, contractor vendors, and volunteers), and youth. The target cessation date is April 1, 2023. The Department has adopted a new strategic cadence of testing. This includes increasing the use of point of care rapid antigen testing for symptomatic and exposed persons.

The use of medical isolation for individuals testing positive for COVID-19 (or any other highly contagious virus) remains best practice for congregate, correctional and hospital settings. CDC recommends 10-day quarantine and isolation periods for the following reasons of caution: (1) the high risk of widespread transmission in congregate housing environments, and (2) the high burden of underlying conditions that increase the risk of severe illness from COVID-19. Considering the risk of transmission, local context, and characteristics of the DJS facilities, quarantine periods have been reduced to 10 days from 14 days for units/individuals that have been exposed to a COVID-19 positive or suspected COVID-19 positive individual.

Youth who test positive for COVID-19 will continue to be retested for COVID-19 5 to 7 days after symptoms started or if asymptomatic, 5 to 7 days after the positive test collection date. The absence or improvement of symptoms and a negative test is used to end the isolation period of at least 7 days. Additionally, all youth in medical isolation and youth housed on quarantined units are assessed by a licensed medical professional daily and at frequent intervals as ordered by our physician and nurse practitioner staff. Behavioral health professionals are consulted and check on youth in isolation status, daily.

Based on current low rates of Covid-19 DJS is planning to phase out requiring indoor masking for youth. The Department will continue to monitor the presence of Covid-19 as it considers phasing out requiring masks for staff in May.

## **Behavior Health Response**

The Behavioral Health Unit has continued to actively interview and recruit for vacancies during this period via advertising, meetings with potential university partners and attendance at job fairs. Services at CYDC, Hickey and BCJJC are provided via contractual agreement. A part-time contracted provider began providing services at VCC in September 2022. This contract ended as of March 26, 2023 and another contract is in process for a part-time provider at VCC.

Additionally, a contract for more long-term behavioral health support at VCC is posted. A psychologist for the Eastern Shore area began working with the Department in November 2022. A Psychology Associate was hired to conduct evaluations in the community and at detention centers in January 2023.

Candidates have been identified for psychology associate and social work positions at the Hickey Shelter, VCC, WMCC, BMYC, CYDC, and LESCC/Eastern Shore and are in the prescreening process. A candidate for the social work manager position at Headquarters has been identified and is in the prescreening process. Recruitments for positions at the Youth Centers and VCC as well as Headquarters remain active and applicant interviews are ongoing.

## **DETENTION CENTERS**

### **Baltimore City Juvenile Justice Center (BCJJC)**

#### **Youth Safety and Facility Security**

BCJJC is working with the Professional Training Education Unit (PTEU) to develop specific training on April 7, 2023, with administration and all staff. This training will focus on the importance of ethical behavior, appropriate staff and youth boundaries and improving safety and security (staff posting, youth movement, etc.). Training will be ongoing to facilitate improvement in facility operations.

Administration staff were placed in coverage to help monitor, train and support staff development, improve safety and security and model appropriate interactions.

The Superintendent has begun weekly video review meetings with administrative and GLM II staff to train residential staff on how to assess incidents critically, and to develop training plans for staff in need of closer supervision. In addition, Crisis Prevention Management (CPM) training is being provided, with emphasis on being proactive and aware of the signs of tension, proper de-escalation strategies and calling for staff assistance when needed.

Regarding incidents 172198 and 172181, youth was held accountable through the behavior motivation system. Supervisory staff will receive documented coaching, counseling and progressive discipline for their lack of follow-up to address staff poor performance.



Regarding incidents 172280 and 172273, the facility has developed facility wide search procedures to help combat the influx of contraband. Group Life Manager (GLM) II staff assemble search teams and perform unannounced searches weekly. Staff will be re-trained on safety and security with focus on prevention, early intervention and proper response to facility incidents and when to call for assistance.

BCJC building security staff are scheduled for a refresher course in April 2023 on the pat down searches required at facility entry to help eliminate contraband being brought into the facility.

Regarding incidents 172273 and 172280, both were reported to the DJS Office of the Inspector General (OIG), Child Protective Services (CPS) and Maryland State Police (MSP) for investigation. In both incidents, staff involved no longer work for DJS.

All youth receive a minimum of six calls per week; four through the DJS phone system (ViaPath formerly known as GTL) and two video/phone calls through facility case management. Youth can receive additional calls through the behavior modification system. To accommodate the amount of calls provided on a weekly basis, DJS is currently working with the vendor to provide more phones on each unit.

Facility case management are responsible for verifying the phone numbers added to the youth's account. In this situation, the Case Manager was new and did not follow the verification process.

Case Managers will receive ongoing training on the process to remove numbers from the system when youth are released and verify numbers being added to the phone system through the DJS database.

### **Physical Plant Issues**

At the noted observation (picture), drain flies were in the building. The pest control company came to the facility on March 17, 2023, and will continue to come monthly to maintain a pest free environment.

In addition, maintenance staff flush drains bi-weekly to control future infestations. Plumbing services unclogged all drains as of March 13, 2023. Work to replace toilets in the facility in need of immediate replacement was completed on March 20, 2023, with the exception of one toilet replaced on Pod-E still that will not flush and will not be used until the matter can be resolved by maintenance. Maintenance staff during weekly department head meetings will report on any problems in this area and the facility leadership will reconcile any outstanding issues.

Toothbrush covers were provided to youth to place on their toothbrushes, prior to placing their toothbrush in hygiene bags. The hygiene bags are then collected by staff and kept outside of the youth rooms.

### **Youth with High Mental Health Needs**

Regarding incidents 172195, 172271 and 172417, involved one youth that was successfully placed in Spring Grove Hospital to address identified needs on February 15, 2023. The placement occurred after

multiple attempts were made to secure this youth inpatient care to include the youth being evaluated at the local emergency department on more than one occasion. DJS continues to work with stakeholders and the courts, to identify more appropriate placements for youth who have significant mental health needs.

Regarding Incident 172342, it involved one youth waived up to the adult system on January 1, 2023.

All DJS facility staff receive entry level training in trauma informed care and Youth Mental Health First Aid. Youth Mental Health First Aid is designed to teach parents, family members, caregivers, teachers, school staff, peers, neighbors, health and human services workers, and other caring citizens how to help an adolescent (age 12-18) who is experiencing a mental health or addictions challenge or is in crisis. Youth Mental Health First Aid is primarily designed for adults who regularly interact with young people. The course introduces common mental health challenges for youth, reviews typical adolescent development, and teaches a 5-step action plan for how to help young people in both crisis and non-crisis situations. Topics covered include anxiety, depression, substance use, disorders in which psychosis may occur, disruptive behavior disorders (including AD/HD), and eating disorders.

A contract vendor provides behavioral health services and currently has no staff vacancies. Youth with special and/or higher behavioral health needs may be placed on a guarded care plan that includes additional interventions and counseling services with a licensed therapist.

Mechanical restraints are only used to protect the youth or other individuals, in a secure transport, or to prevent an escape in accordance with DJS policy. Staff use incremental preventive interventions prior to placing a youth in seclusion. There is a seclusion process for authorization, approval and required observations by medical and behavioral health staff once a youth is placed in seclusion. Seclusion is not to be used as punishment or as a disciplinary sanction and is only to be used for a limited amount of time when a youth presents an imminent threat of physical harm to themselves or other individuals, has not responded to less restrictive methods of control or for whom less restrictive measures cannot reasonably be tried or when a youth has escaped or attempted to escape in accordance with DJS policy.

DJS is in the process of scheduling joint meetings with MDH and other state agencies to collaborate on services required for this population.

### **Lack of Quality Programming**

A new Acting Superintendent started on March 8, 2023. Administrative oversight of programming and the activity schedule has been transferred to the Assistant Superintendent of Support Services.

On March 29, 2023, a meeting was scheduled with the IT support team to gain new equipment such as a new computer and beats program apparatus in order for the music room to be utilized. All youth have access to the arcade room. The Acting Superintendent is in the process of developing a schedule and revising usage and will have this completed by the first week of April 2023.

In March 2023, DJS met with two organizations, BreakFree Education, a 501(c)(3) non-profit organization who works with juvenile justice programs throughout the US to provide resources for teachers, postsecondary opportunities, technical support and school management. In addition, DJS met with Freedom Reads, an organization that donates books and creates libraries in youth housing units in juvenile facilities across the US. The DJS Capitol Planning Unit is working with the organization to move forward on creating custom designed and built libraries on the residential units. DJS looks forward to developing partnerships with both of these organizations.

As of March 12, 2023, with positive tests remaining low DJS COVID restrictions and mitigation strategies have started to ease, lifting the weekly testing requirement for volunteers and vendors who provide programming at the facility as the Department continues to monitor Covid-19 daily. At the time of this writing, 15 volunteer and contracted programs have returned to in-person services. Beyond Rhetoric, volunteer program which provides groups on fatherhood and parenting is scheduled to restart at the end of April 2023.

As of March 16, 2023, COVID restrictions and mitigation strategies have been revised, with youth now permitted to mix for groups, programming, and recreational opportunities. Recreation staff will enhance the recreational opportunities available by providing youth and staff competitions with more robust programming and outside activities, weather permitting. Staff led programming includes movie nights, unit of the week activities, ice cream socials, etc. In addition, staff are excited to start new fatherhood and parenting groups in April 2023 as well.

Reflections provides interactive team building and problem-solving activities which allows youth and staff to use creative thinking, communication, and collaboration in order to solve hands on challenges as a team. Reflections is scheduled to go to BCJJC on April 1, 2023.

Youth have the opportunity to voice their concerns regarding programming through multiple avenues such as bi-monthly youth roundtables, bi-weekly youth advisory boards and youth surveys.

## **Education**

A school counselor started this quarter and an additional counselor and science teacher have been recommended for hire and are currently in the screening process. JSEP is currently conducting interviews for the remaining vacant positions.

JSEP is working closely with Human Resources to attract, recruit, and retain qualified teachers. The principal recently attended the Maryland National Guard Spring Job Fair. The event was hosted by the Maryland National Guard and Maryland Department of Labor. The job fair was open to the public, and there were over 20 state agencies on-site, conducting live interviews for various positions across all job fields. Eighty-three attendees visited the DJS table to learn more about the DJS.

## Cheltenham Youth Detention Center (CYDC)

In 2022, increases in critical incidents are a concern. Challenges facing the facility include the adult hold population increasing, tension amongst the units, a number of more aggressive youth, youth with higher behavioral health needs, staffing shortages, and youth being served out of jurisdiction.

There were three youth at CYDC that had highly acute, severe mental health diagnoses that contributed to the increase in incidents. These youth were seen by behavioral health daily and safety plans were developed by behavioral health clinicians to aid the facility in reducing their impulsive urges to self-harm. The psychiatrist was active in the treatment process meeting with each of the youth weekly. The three youth were sent out several times to the local emergency room but returned on most occasions due to a lack of available in-patient beds in the state of Maryland.

The Assistant Superintendent assumed the role of Superintendent on March 8, 2023. Additional leadership changes were implemented as of March 31, 2023, with the aim of improving conditions overall. Under new leadership, a multi-layered approach to reduce the number of contraband incidents will be implemented.

### **Detained Girls**

The Alfred D. Noyes Children's Center (Noyes) remains closed. The female population awaiting an adjudication hearing will remain at CYDC or LESCC. The Noyes staff were temporarily assigned to facilities across the state with the majority of staff going to CYDC. The Victor Cullen Center currently remains a co-ed facility for the female population who meet the criteria for a Level III- Hardware Secure Treatment Program. A full assessment is planned to assess future placement and programming for girls in placement.

DJS is empowered by statute to detain a youth who either poses a clear risk to themselves/others, or is deemed likely to leave court jurisdiction. The decision is guided by the Detention Risk Assessment Instrument (DRAI) and is subject to court review on the next day.

The court determines the appropriate level of care for each youth. The DJS placement process is designed to select the most appropriate program and treatment services for each youth.

Despite the challenges of moving from Noyes, the behavioral health staff at Noyes continues to provide consistent behavior health support and services to the girls while they are at CYDC. To assist staff, a UMBC social work intern is providing two additional days of services to the girls. Current Noyes behavioral health staffing includes two Advanced Social Workers and the behavioral health supervisor who is also an Advanced Professional Counselor. There is one open vacancy for Noyes for an Advanced Professional Counselor, which is currently in active recruitment.

Moreover, the medical needs are addressed at CYDC for this population by the same team of healthcare providers (Physicians and Nurse Practitioners) that served the population at Noyes. The medical clinic at CYDC is outfitted to treat the female population. Female-specific supplies and care products are present at CYDC. The Interagency Agreement for Midwifery Services is in the modification process to extend contracted Midwifery Services to CYDC.

Facility leadership is working collaboratively with the behavioral health staff to develop core population management strategies through a gender responsive lens to better address the behaviors of the female youth.

Additional training is being conducted with CYDC staff to better understand the difference between adolescent girls and boys in the juvenile detention setting. Gender Responsive practices and protocols are currently in place. The Superintendent has met with CYDC staff and provided guidance regarding decision-making processes and ways to boost female youth morale as well as address significant needs.

Management meets bi-weekly with all departments to discuss the female population, social norms, youth interest, trauma, medical concerns to include hygiene, and any undiagnosed special educational needs. Cosmetology services started on March 12, 2023. The female youth meet with the administrative team weekly on an individual basis to discuss goals and prevention strategies.

### **Staffing and Severe Operational Shortcomings**

DJS is working hard to address staffing shortages across the state and will continue to aggressively recruit for staff. We are working to expedite staff returning to work, scrutinizing callouts and utilizing administrators in coverage while we continue our hiring efforts to enhance safety for youth and staff and reduce incidents.

As CYDC experienced severe staffing shortages, the population increased. Safety and security of staff and youth is the top priority. Since the fourth quarter, several vacancies have been filled in the residential classification. There were two classes that attended the agency's ELT training academy. The managers and supervisors have been working on the units alongside staff to give support and assist with daily movement. Youth have been encouraged to attend school and management will ensure youth are transitioned to school on a daily basis on time to receive educational services. When youth refuse to transition to school, staff will process with those youth and they can be held accountable through the behavior motivation system. Management will continue to oversee the mealtimes to ensure youth are transitioned to the dining hall to receive dietary services.

### **Incidents**

The administrative team recognized the increase in group assaults amongst the youth and is working to decrease the amount of incidents and assaults within the facility, including by training and support for new staff with limited experience.

Continuous efforts to train, coach, mentor and guide the new staff are being made on all levels of supervision. The training with staff will focus on safety and security policies pertaining to supervision and movement, emergency management, behavioral motivation system, post orders, incident reporting and the standards of conduct.

The Assistant Superintendent of Operations will provide close observation of youth dynamics. The Administrative team meets to conduct critical incident debriefings with all youth involved when critical incidents occur. Youth are also given an opportunity to mediate with the victim of the assault. In addition, a training focus will be prevention, intervention and when to call for assistance to ensure that staff are in the best position to curtail these types of incidents. An increase in facility programming will also help in these efforts to reduce incidents. The Superintendent has also requested behavior health assist with conflict resolution.

Regarding incidents 172513 and 172517, staff involved received a letter of instruction and received refresher training on supervision and movement and emergency management policies. Youth during these incidents were able to move around the unit without permission from staff. Staff were reminded of protocol for calling for assistance using early intervention when youth do not follow staff directives.

RISE, the new behavior motivation system should have an impact on improving youth behavior. Regarding incident 172406, the staff involved received training on the supervision and movement policy and expectations for sight and sound supervision. The entrance door to the movie room should have remained secured with staff present separating this youth from other youth on the unit.

Video debriefing was conducted with staff to review areas for improvement and used as a training tool. Youth involved were held accountable through the behavior motivation system and case management conducted a group to process with youth on their behavior.

Regarding incident 172290, the staff involved received training on the supervision and movement policy and expectations, utilization of the behavior motivation system to manage youth behavior and calling for assistance if youth fail to meet program expectations. Staff has the responsibility to distribute food, and youth should not be permitted to take, share, or give other youth food or beverages. Youth must remain seated during mealtimes and no horse playing is allowed. Youth and staff were provided medical services and no serious injuries were noted.

### **Lack of Activities**

The Administrative team meets weekly with the recreation staff to help ensure the youth are engaged in gender-specific activities. Currently, the youth participate in unit of the week activities, silk screening, arts and crafts, weekly movie nights, weekly/monthly themed events, arcade room, and weight room activities.

As of March 1, 2023, we gave all CYDC youth new MP3 players with programmed approved music. There has been a schedule set in place for recreation staff to ensure all youth MP3 players will be updated with new music monthly.

As of March 16, 2023, the COVID restrictions and mitigation strategies have started to ease and youth are now permitted to mix for groups, programming, and recreational opportunities. Recreation staff will enhance the recreational opportunities available by providing youth and staff competitions with more robust programming and outside activities to include using the field and track spaces and outside exercise equipment, weather permitting.

Youth have the opportunity to voice their concerns regarding programming through multiple avenues such as bi-monthly youth roundtables, bi-weekly youth advisory boards and youth surveys. From their input, DJS is in the process of initiating contracts with vendors to provide youth development programming to include music production, life skills, ceramic arts, workforce development, etc.

The Assistant Superintendent of Programming will have close observation of the monthly program calendar to ensure the programs on the schedule are robust and occurring.

## **Education**

The vacancy for a principal has been filled. CYDC does not have a special education vacancy. We are currently conducting interviews to fill the science and math vacancies.

The GED administrator position has been filled and computers for the mobile lab are being readied. Each GED mobile lab has the ability to test multiple students at a time. The mobile lab is available to all detention centers.

## **Charles H. Hickey, Jr. School (Hickey)**

In 2022, concerning increases in critical incidents is attributed at least partly to a number of youth with significant behavioral health needs. The increase in fights, restraints and seclusion incidents was caused primarily by twelve youth.

The administrative team put the following corrective measures in place:

- Weekly management meetings to discuss and brainstorm about youth behaviors, triggers, family issues, and unit assignments to become preventive and have immediate corrective action.
- Staff participated in daily briefings to ensure they were aware of the youth's behavior, triggers and emotional and/or mental status. Staff were instructed to utilize every attempt to de-escalate a youth's behavior prior to the use of physical or mechanical restraints or seclusion.

- Participated in the youth support team meetings to ensure appropriate discussion around supports for youth were occurring and also follow-up to make certain that any youth that are placed on guarded care plans or behavior contracts were being followed through with each department affected.
- Each member of the Administrative Team identified a late evening to remain in the facility to ensure safety and security as well as facility norms are being adhered to.
- Unannounced rounds were increased to ensure more management presence on the units.
- Unit Managers were placed in coverage to train new staff, redirect any procedural breaches by seasoned staff, and continue to set facility norms, decrease overtime, which minimizes staff being tired and/or burnt out.
- Utilized the Behavior Health Mobile team as an increased support for the youth.

In January 2023, RISE, a new behavior motivation system was implemented which includes a reinforcer store, You've Been Spotted incentives, weekly facility incentives, and unit of the week opportunities. RISE has restorative practices, where the youth has the opportunity to work through and accept responsibility for their behavior and make amends to the community with the resident advisors, case management and behavioral health staff. Incidents have decreased so far this year.

Youth with special and/or higher behavioral health needs were assessed for medication management, a guarded care plan that includes additional interventions and counseling services and increased behavior health sessions.

### **Youth with Physical Disabilities**

Facility infirmaries are designed to manage youth with acute and chronic care needs, as well as youth that have care needs requiring specialized equipment and services. The clinical team along with the Superintendent attended multiple care coordination meetings to prepare for the needs of this youth prior to his admission to the facility.

A treatment plan was developed and the youth's needs were identified. The youth was clinically housed in the facility's infirmary unit after the assessment by the Medical and Clinical Directors. Prior to the youth's infirmary admission, the Clinical Director met with the maintenance staff to rehab and outfit the bathroom and shower area to accommodate the youth. These accommodations included the addition of a long extension shower chair for the youth to transfer from wheelchair to shower without assistance, an Eco-Performance Handheld Hand Shower with Slide Bar was installed, and a privacy curtain was added. Additionally, a specialty bed with an inflatable air mattress, special appliances for bowel and bladder training, and a lightweight sports wheelchair were purchased to meet the needs of the youth. On-site physical therapy services were consulted and the therapist demonstrated, assisted and assessed



the youth's ability to independently complete basic hygiene, transfers on equipment and exercises. On-site therapy continues to provide task specific exercises to improve youth mobility and independence. The Clinical Director held multiple trainings for the assigned residential staff and nursing team on the care and treatment plan of the youth. Specialized mobility services for the youth have been secured and utilized to transport the youth to off-site medical and court appointments.

Upon admission, the youth was utilizing a heavier and bulkier wheelchair that posed some difficulties for him to maneuver considering his physical abilities at such time. The youth shared his concerns and a new lightweight sports wheelchair was purchased and outfitted to the youth resulting in an eased ability for him to manipulate on even terrain. The lightweight chair provided the youth with more agility, however, in areas of incline, assistance is provided to the youth as needed.

### **Physical Plant**

All unit showers areas were power cleaned, and the stains were removed from the shower walls. Maintenance also ensured the ventilation systems were working properly in all the shower areas on each unit. A corrective action plan was developed to clean the shower areas daily and to power clean the entire unit areas twice a week. The youth are assigned cleaning chores and are rewarded through the behavior motivation system. Extermination services occur twice a month. The renovation project on Ford Hall (Admission Unit) is ongoing and includes updated flooring, shower area and youth rooms for a more inviting environment.

### **Education**

Since the 4<sup>th</sup> Quarter of 2022, vacancies for social studies, special education and resource positions have been filled. There are no current CTE vacancies.

JSEP is required to provide 2.5 hours of post-secondary instruction for students who have obtained their high school diploma. This is generally done in a variety of ways. Students have the opportunity to enroll in Ed2go certificate programs through Frederick County Community College. These courses generally start on a rolling basis and last up to six weeks. We also engage students with various workforce development activities surrounding time management, communication skills, job skills, identifying personal strengths and goal setting. Students are given the opportunity to earn flagger certification and participate in various career exploration activities.

Our guidance department also assists students with taking the Accuplacer, completing the FAFSA and various other college access activities. Due to some student interest, we are also looking to add the ASVAB. Credit bearing courses at post-secondary institutions are most often aligned with the semester system. This is generally true of students in a community setting as well. JSEP does not have the ability to independently alter the traditional post-secondary semester system. In terms of graduate students traveling with their assigned units to school, JSEP does not make these determinations and we're open to a creative alternative setting for graduate students.

## **Shelter Care**

DJS has made adjustments based off of youth concerns and the JJMU recommendations regarding daily operations of the shelter. As of March 2023, DJS ordered additional items to create more of a home like environment such as decorative sports and inspirational posters, bookshelves, and vibrant colorful rugs to name a few. The youth currently do have individual beds with character themed comforters and dressers to store their clothing. Youth are now able to wear their personal clothing and tennis shoes and receive barbering services. Youth are permitted to make four calls a week using the DJS phone system (ViaPath formerly known as GTL) phones and on occasion are allowed to make more calls to significant persons and family members on their approved calls lists. Youth will be attending off ground activities at the Evening Reporting Center starting April 2023. Community case managers do support youth attending off-ground activities such as shopping, eating at restaurants and going to the movies.

The meal service for the Shelter Program is provided by the Food and Nutrition Services team on-site at the Charles H. Hickey Jr. School. The meals are prepared according to the statewide DJS menu. The youth are provided three meals and three snacks each day that nutritiously considers the dietary and health needs of adolescents.

Youth are able to go outside daily and have several outside areas dedicated for recreation, such as walking outdoors, a basketball court and outdoor fitness equipment. DJS is in the process of renovating the indoor gym next to the Shelter building. The youth have board games, gaming consoles, and books and journals available daily. The youth are enrolled in virtual classes that are streamed live from a remote location in the state. This provides all students with content area specialists in each subject. Students in these courses may ask questions in chat boxes, they may raise their hands when they have questions, and teachers may unmute students to ask clarifying questions, to answer questions or to discuss content. All students have Chromebooks available and are enrolled in JSEP virtual courses.

### **Alfred D. Noyes Children’s Center and Thomas J.S. Waxter Children’s Center**

As of today, the Alfred D. Noyes Children’s Center (Noyes) remains temporarily closed. The female population awaiting an adjudication hearing are currently held at CYDC or LESCC. The Waxter staff were reassigned to facilities across the state. The Victor Cullen Center is currently serving as a co-ed facility, including for the female population who meet the criteria for a Level III- Hardware Secure Treatment Program.

The Thomas J.S. Waxter Children’s Center closed on March 2, 2022.

### **Lower Eastern Shore Children’s Center**

There is concern about increased critical incidents, which are largely attributed to a number of youth with significant behavioral health needs, medical isolation/quarantine on more than one occasion, and COVID outbreaks which resulted in youth being unable to leave the units and too much downtime for

youth. In addition, having the Recreational Specialist position vacant for approximately eight months contributed to the challenges. The Recreational Specialist was hired in December 2022.

DJS requested support for additional training from PTEU in prevention and intervention strategies in working with youth. The Superintendent has begun weekly video review meetings with administrative and Group Life Managers to train residential staff on how to assess critical incidents, and to develop training plans for staff in need of closer supervision. The Superintendent will continue to utilize behavioral health and case management services as a support for the youth with special and/or higher behavioral health needs to develop guarded care plans and/or behavior contracts that include additional interventions and counseling services.

The increase in physical restraints of youth by staff increased during the year primarily due to nine (9) youth. Several youth have higher behavioral health needs, while others have behavior issues trying to adjust to being detained. Multiple interventions were implemented to help stabilize youth through meetings with the youth support team with staff from all disciplines, 1:1 staff supervision, and unannounced rounds by the Superintendent to show additional support.

Staff use incremental preventive interventions prior to placing a youth in seclusion. There is a seclusion process for authorization, approval and required observations by medical and behavioral health staff once a youth is placed in seclusion. Seclusion is not to be used as punishment or as a disciplinary sanction and is only to be used for a limited amount of time when a youth presents an imminent threat of physical harm to themselves or other individuals, has not responded to less restrictive methods of control or for whom less restrictive measures cannot reasonably be tried or when a youth has escaped or attempted to escape in accordance with DJS policy.

Youth can be placed on 1:1 staff supervision by Residential Advisor staff or on a suicide watch level by behavior health staff for various reasons including staff observing unusual behavior, a youth scoring high on an assessment at admission, being transferred from another DJS facility while already on suicide watch, attempting suicide or expresses suicidal ideation verbally or in writing, engaging in self-injurious behavior, or demonstrating other unusual behavior in accordance with DJS policy.

In accordance with the CPM training, staff shall incrementally use preventive interventions such as the behavior motivation system to de-escalate and defuse a potential crisis. Physical and mechanical restraints should only be used as a last resort. Shift Commanders monitor the use of restraints and the Superintendent reviews to ensure compliance with the policy.

In February 2023, RISE, new behavior motivation system was implemented which includes a reinforcer store, You've Been Spotted incentives, weekly facility incentives, and unit of the week opportunities. RISE has restorative practices, where the youth has the opportunity to work through and accept responsibility for their behavior and make amends to the community with the resident advisors, case management and behavioral health staff. Incidents have decreased so far for this year.

## **Youth Safety**

Regarding Incident 172461, staff had not entered Entry Level Training at the time of the incident. Staff has since successfully completed ELT and is now fully certified. All staff have been retrained on the CPM and Incident Reporting policies, protocol and requirement as a mandated reporter. At the time, the staff received a letter of counseling and was coached on his role and responsibilities.

Regarding Incident 172600, the youth was not pat searched prior to leaving the facility. All staff have been re-trained on the expectations within the Searches of Youth, Employees, and Visitors and the Transportation of Youth policies. During this period, LESCC conducted unannounced searches of the facility to include living areas and the youth rooms and found contraband. The facility will continue to conduct unannounced rounds weekly.

## **Activities**

Youth have the opportunity to voice their concerns regarding programming through multiple avenues such as bi-monthly youth roundtables, bi-weekly youth advisory boards and youth surveys.

The COVID restrictions and mitigation strategies have started to ease by lifting the weekly testing requirement for volunteers and vendors who provide programming at the facility. Volunteers have started to return to in person programming. DJS has also reached out to organizations such as Beacon Bible Baptist Church, Jermichael Mitchell - Mayoral Candidate, and members from the Divine 9 and is awaiting follow-up.

In addition to partnering with local organizations, DJS has also targeted outreach efforts, such as social media, email, resource fairs and open houses to recruit volunteers. Staff members are also encouraged to spread the word and recruit members from the community who have a special skill set to volunteer and provide programming.

## **Education**

Youth at LESCC have access to Library Books weekly and upon request. The ELA teacher and Principal have submitted requests to the Library Media Coordinator for student requested titles and book series.

New Smart Boards were delivered and installed on March 7, 2023, and are currently being used in all three classrooms.

## **Western Maryland Children's Center (WMCC)**

In 2022, WMCC received youth with more challenging behaviors. There is concern about an increase of fights and assaults, which also resulted in the increase of physical restraints, use of seclusion and

mechanical restraints in order to provide safety to all youth and staff at the facility. The increase in incidents was caused mainly by six youth.

The staff sought to exhaust all other de-escalation techniques prior to using physical and mechanical restraints and seclusion. Behavioral Health staff were involved in each incident and developed guarded care plan(s) as appropriate. The behavioral health mobile team was used on several occasions.

In January 2023, RISE, new behavior motivation system was implemented which includes a reinforcer store, You've Been Spotted incentives, weekly facility incentives, and unit of the week opportunities. RISE has restorative practices, where the youth has the opportunity to work through and accept responsibility for their behavior and make amends to the community with the resident advisors, case management and behavioral health staff. The youth are providing positive feedback to the new RISE system. Incidents have decreased so far for this year.

While suicide ideation increased in 2022, as noted in the report, the average daily population at WMCC increased by 36% in calendar year 2022 when compared to 2021. In addition, the 4<sup>th</sup> quarter also had two high risk youth accounting for the majority of the noted incidents.

The high risk youth had guarded care plans, coordinated efforts with psychiatry for medication purposes, and met with behavior health staff consistently. One of the youth was transported to the emergency room and was stabilized pending the availability of an adolescent inpatient psychiatric bed. After three days, he was more stable and returned. However, after a few days he was placed back on the highest level of suicide watch. A 1:1 staff supervision was assigned to him for most of his stay at WMCC. With both youth, behavioral health included Bayr, therapy dog in their work with the youth.

A Case Management Specialist has been hired and begins on April 5, 2023. The Case Management Specialist Supervisor position was reposted and interviews were scheduled on March 24, 2023, however, the applicant did not show up and the position will be reposted. A Behavioral Health Clinician has been selected.

At times, the front entrance post is staffed by the administrative staff when additional rovers are needed due to youth appointments. Therefore, the door to the administrative offices is open to easily check-in visitors and staff as needed. We continue hiring efforts through job fairs and advertisements to increase the staff which will address the entry post.

The process for volunteers is to complete the volunteer application, submit the background check and be fully cleared and complete the training can take 2-3 weeks. The community volunteer who was providing a commercial driver's license (CDL) course has informed DJS that he no longer can provide volunteer services as it is not "convenient for him right now".

The COVID restrictions and mitigation strategies have started to ease by lifting the weekly testing requirement for volunteers and vendors who provide programming at the facility. Volunteers such as

Faith and Works, Inc. has started in person programming. DJS has also reached out to organizations such as MD Youth for Christ, Frederick Community College, and Champion Mentoring, Inc. and is awaiting follow-up.

In addition to partnering with local organizations, DJS has also targeted outreach efforts, such as social media, email, resource fairs and open houses to recruit volunteers. Staff members are also encouraged to spread the word and recruit members from the community who have a special skill set to volunteer and provide programming.

In addition, WMCC will continue to create activities and schedule programming to keep the youth engaged through staff led programs like epoxy classes, Reflections and recreation.

The hiring of the second case manager will allow more activities to be scheduled throughout the weekday evenings and weekends. Both case managers will conduct structured group activities with the youth. Case management will also develop and maintain the activity schedule and be seeking out community volunteers to provide programming to the youth.

## **Committed Treatment Programs**

### **Victor Cullen Center**

#### **Girls at Victor Cullen**

As of today, the Alfred D. Noyes Children's Center (Noyes) remains closed. The female population awaiting an adjudication is currently at CYDC or LESCC. The Noyes staff were temporarily assigned to facilities across the state with the majority of staff going to CYDC. The Victor Cullen Center (VCC) is currently a co-ed facility for the female population who meet the criteria for a Level III- Hardware Secure Treatment Program.

Prior to the opening of the female program, staff received Gender Specific Training conducted by the Director of Behavioral Health and other behavioral health staff with expertise in working with female youth in residential care as well as an administrator from the Alfred D. Noyes Children's Center. The female Assistant Superintendent of Support Services was overseeing the female unit. DJS is continuing to aggressively recruit for staff in all areas.

VCC has hired a Case Manager for the female unit. VCC has three dedicated, full-time mental health clinicians, as well as additional mental health clinicians who provide clinical services to youth. Behavioral health clinicians are not assigned to a unit. Instead, youth are matched with clinicians based on their needs and clinician caseloads. DJS continues to actively recruit behavioral health clinicians to provide services to all the youth.

Regarding incident 172484, the youth made allegations that she was pushed by a staff and that she received a behavior report for pushing the staff back. The youth's allegations were reported to the OIG, Child Protective Services and Maryland State Police to investigate.

Youth in medical isolation are secured in their room and other youth are not permitted to be around the medically isolated youth to keep other youth and staff safe. The chair placed in the hallway was not placed there for the youth, but rather for the staff who was providing supervision. The outcome of the investigation did not support the allegations made by the youth.

The female population receive consistent weekly treatment services by licensed therapists. Each youth has an individualized treatment plan. Each youth receives a minimum of one hour of individual therapy per week, which includes TAMAR (Trauma Addictions Mental Health and Recovery) trauma curriculum, and those with trauma symptoms receive Trauma-Focused Cognitive Behavioral Therapy (TF-CBT). All youth participate in weekly groups, and those with substance use issues participate in twice weekly Seven Challenges process groups, as well as journaling. Youth with special and/or higher behavioral health needs may also be placed on a guarded care plan that includes additional interventions. The Superintendent will ensure the residential staff is working diligently with behavioral health staff to fulfill the requirements in guarded care plans.

The youth in question has done well and is progressing in the program and does not require 1:1 staff supervision.

The other youth was initially enrolled in college courses, however, was not enrolled in time and was re-registered and completed the course. The following are additional post-secondary options available to Juvenile Services Education Program (JSEP) high-school graduates: Frederick County Community College, Garrett College, Accuplacer Preparation and Testing, Code.org, Conover WorkPlace Readiness Job Readiness Series, CPR/First Aid, Flagger, OSHA 10, OSHA 30, ServSafe Food Handler and ServSafe Manager.

Visitation is offered on a daily basis-seven days a week. In addition, community case management can assist with transporting families to the center.

Regarding incident 172621, upon receipt of contraband, VCC opened a Management Investigation Review (MIR) and notified OIG, MSP and CPS. MSP and CPS ruled it out and OIG after their investigation was unable to determine staff involvement or how the vape got into the facility. A refresher course on pat down searches required at entry have been completed with staff and VCC also will conduct unannounced searches weekly on each unit. There was no investigation for staff being involved in passing notes from female to male youth.

VCC and JSEP did have a graduation ceremony planned for this youth. However, this youth was removed from the facility prior to the planned ceremony due to allegations and substantiated findings from an

investigation. However, VCC created a graduation video that was played at the ceremony at Cheltenham Youth Detention Center (CYDC).

### **Lack of Programming**

The daily schedule is intended to have little down time for youth. School is six hours a day for five days a week. Following the conclusion of school, youth then participate in treatment groups prior to dinner. Following dinner, youth have three hours left in the day, which includes recreation and leisure activities and showers. VCC is scheduled Friday April 7, 2023, to participate in Reflections which has low elements and ground games activities. The school library is accessible to all youth and they are eligible to sign books out. The weekend schedules include recreation and leisure time activities, arts and crafts, tie dying, bingo, board games, card games, pedicures, bike riding, and basketball shoot outs. Now that COVID restrictions have eased, we will be able to increase more activities on the weekend such as sports related tournaments in basketball, flag football, volleyball and kickball.

The behavior management system promotes participation in recreation and leisure activities. If a youth receives a behavior report for receiving an infraction, this would not prohibit the youth from participating in recreation and leisure activities per DJS policy.

The expectation is to keep youth engaged and active in programming and not to have youth in their rooms until it is bedtime. It is essential to have the youth in the dayroom as a group in order for the staff to maintain sight and sound supervision for the safety and security of all youth and staff.

High school graduates are not threatened with Behavior Response reports for not attending high school classes. JSEP offers a selection of post graduate course work, certification programs and college level courses and these options are available to graduates in a separate classroom from the general education population. Graduates who refuse to transition to the school to take advantage of these opportunities can be held accountable through the behavior motivation system for not meeting program expectations.

Youth have the opportunity to voice their concerns regarding programming through multiple avenues such as bi-monthly youth roundtables, bi-weekly youth advisory boards and youth surveys. From their input, DJS is in the process of initiating contracts with vendors to provide youth development programming to include life skills, arts, workforce development, etc. Barbering and cosmetology certifications take longer to accrue than the time a youth will be at a treatment program. VCC has been given approval to purchase music equipment to re-start a music program.

The COVID restrictions and mitigation strategies have started to ease by lifting the weekly testing requirement for volunteers and vendors who provide programming at the facility, several volunteers have resumed in-person services. VCC is partnering with Faith and Works, Inc., MD Youth for Christ, Citizens Assisting and Sheltering the Abused (CASA, Inc.), and the Barksdale Business to explore opportunities for in person services in the upcoming months. DJS has also reached out to Mount St.



Mary's University to reignite bringing the youth at VCC to their campus for student and athletic opportunities.

DJS has also reached out to organizations such as AA Washington County, Kairos Prison Ministry, Cares Program, and Big Brothers and Big Sisters of America and is awaiting follow-up.

In addition to partnering with local organizations, DJS has also targeted outreach efforts, such as social media, email, resource fairs and open houses to recruit volunteers. Staff members are also encouraged to spread the word and recruit members from the community who have a special skill set to volunteer and provide programming.

## **Education**

The Superintendent and JSEP headquarters staff are actively interviewing and seeking staff to fill positions. Most recently, a certified teacher was hired to fill the resource teacher position at the end of February and another new teacher is in the screening process and scheduled to start in April.

An incident was reported by students on January 31, 2023, regarding an alleged comment that a teacher made to students, calling them "criminals". The students were interviewed and were unable or unwilling to relay any information. The Residential Advisor that was present during the incident resigned. The teacher denied all allegations and comments made. The incident was investigated by OIG.

At no time during the fourth quarter was school "abruptly" canceled by the principal. Any time that students did not report to the school building, education was brought to the living units. Resources are provided for students including Chromebooks, specific online resources and websites, and any alternate paper-based assignments as needed.

JSEP currently has mobile GED testing which has the ability to test students on-site. This minimizes travel times and undue testing anxiety. Students are able to test multiple content areas or have a single test administered. JSEP is working to expand the mobile GED testing process and currently has DJS IT working to set up additional computers for testing. Students at Cullen have been taking advantage of this opportunity and are scheduled for testing.

JSEP has worked to increase library resource availability. There are new options available for students that were not previously seen. Students have access to a library and also to an online library site (Sora). The online site allows students to access a wide variety of books, graphic novels, audiobooks, and more. Resources on the digital site are updated frequently. Through the library media coordinator, specific interest books can be purchased for students and when they are released, they are able to keep them if so desired.

We are working on increasing our career and technical education courses, but there are currently many available. For example, Frederick Community College offers online courses from accounting to computer

programming and design through their workforce development program. Many of these courses have flexible start dates and are self-paced.

### **Garrett Children's Center**

There are a few staff that still report to Garrett Children's Center, including the Superintendent, Assistant Superintendent and Maintenance staff to ensure the facility operations are functioning.

All RA series staff were temporarily reassigned to Green Ridge Youth Center and Backbone Mountain Youth Center. The facility has been temporarily closed since November 5, 2020.

### **Green Ridge and Backbone Mountain Youth Centers**

#### **Constructive Activities**

The daily schedule is intended to have little down time for the youth. School is six hours a day for five days a week. Following the conclusion of school, youth then participate in treatment groups prior to dinner. Following dinner, youth have three hours left in the day, which includes recreation and leisure activities and showers.

With the COVID mitigation strategies starting to ease as of March 16, 2023, Green Ridge Youth Center (GRYC) and Backbone Mountain Youth Centers (BMYC) resumed outdoor off grounds outings as of March 18, 2023. The robust schedule of off-ground trips and activities will include Reflections which offers adventure sports such as high and low rope courses, biking, rock climbing, hiking to Swallow Falls, and fishing. The off-ground activities offer an array of resources for youth to explore the natural surroundings. There is a cadre of state parks, horse ranches, and other local destinations that the youth will enjoy.

During after-school and evening hours youth have participated in several youth advisory boards and Youth Roundtables to offer suggestions for activities they will enjoy. Green Ridge Youth Center created a movie theater atmosphere for the youth to enjoy Netflix with the availability of multiple video game systems. Backbone Mountain Youth Center has several staff led activities such as gardening, maintaining a greenhouse, bingo, learning about pond habitats, tying fish lures, etc. These are all extra activities that are easily accessible on site.

The youth centers each have two libraries that youth have access to. JSEP has worked to increase library resource availability. There are new options available for students that were not previously seen. Students have access to a library and also an online library site (Sora). The online site allows students to access a wide variety of books, graphic novels, audiobooks, and more. Resources on the digital site are updated frequently. Through the library media coordinator, specific interest books can be purchased for students and when they are released, they are able to keep them if so desired.

At the suggestion of one of our youth, Green Ridge Youth Center also purchased two very large lots of comic books. Additionally, family members can purchase books for their child that are approved through the Superintendent. Books can also be donated by staff. Off-ground outings to local libraries is also a consideration.

### **Green Ridge Youth Center Education**

It is the goal of educators at Green Ridge Youth Center to maintain high academic standards within the classroom. The school emphasizes academic achievement and follows the STARR behavior motivation system through the framework of Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports (PBIS). The school has set behavioral expectations to increase support to youth and assist youth in achieving important academic goals.

Introduction to Construction is available only at Green Ridge Youth Center. Students will learn about safety, basic tools, blueprint reading and basic stick frame construction. A dedicated CTE building is in the process of being constructed at Green Ridge and will house additional courses in the field of construction.

### **Backbone Mountain Youth Center Education**

In addition to the courses offered through Garrett College, graduates may also take virtual classes through Frederick Community College or work on certification programs that we have available. Graduates can earn certification in ServSafe, Flagger, OSHA 10, OSHA 30, and C-Tech. However, youth who refuse virtual opportunities for secondary education often times would rather watch television and play video games. Participation in these programs is optional as previously expressed by the Public Defender's office.

Students at Backbone have access to C-Tech programs that teach students real-world skills using a hands-on training approach.

### **DJS Response to World of Work**

The World of Work program is temporarily suspended until the Youth Employment and Compensation Policy can be revised. This is a program the Department wants to have available for youth, but needs to ensure the opportunities available are structured and supervised to meet the job duties.

### **Mountain View**

The female population was at Mountain View until December 22, 2021, at which time Mountain View transitioned into a COVID 19 quarantine site for male youth as a COVID mitigation strategy to keep youth and staff safe.

## Smaller Facility Updates

### Morning Star Youth Academy (VQMS)

#### Pages 53

1. "Morningstar needs to upgrade the physical plant. Long needed and overdue improvements include installing a heating and cooling system in the workout room so that youth can utilize the area during both colder and warmer months; permanently fixing the gym roof (which leaks), and conducting routine maintenance to ensure that the premises is consistently free of debris."

**VQMS Response:** The program has reached out to a company who provides and installs a sealant that will address the leaks. An estimate for the work is pending. The gym is being utilized on days when the weather permits. In regard to the heating and air installation in the facility weight room, the maintenance specialist has reached out to several HVAC vendors to look at quotes and cost effectiveness of the project. The weight room is heated in the colder months by ceramic heaters strategically placed in the room, in the warmer months both doors are open allowing cross ventilation and large fans are brought in for cool air circulation. The weight room is utilized during optimal hours during each season to capitalize on heating and cooling conditions, the youth usually utilize the weight room a few days out of the week. The program has a full-time maintenance specialist. Facility upgrades are completed on a prioritized level. The vacant living unit is currently being worked on in preparation for the living unit to open and the bathroom in the administrative building is being upgraded. The pasture is also being prepared for springtime.

**DJS Response:** L&M monitors the physical plant during each visit, which was occurring monthly during this reporting period. The program is currently in compliance with the physical plant per COMAR 14.31.06.07. The leak in the gym's roof and the heating and cooling system in the workout room does not interfere with the program being able to provide adequate activities for youth in the program. L&M will continue to monitor the progress towards completion of the roof's repair.

2. "Morningstar has had ongoing issues with inadequate youth supervision resulting in drugs and other prohibited items being smuggled into the facility. There were several incidents during the fourth quarter of 2022 where contraband, including vape pens and cell phones) was found in youth living areas (Incident 171956, 171998, 172233, 172312, and 172632). When a youth was questioned about having a vape pen, the youth reported that he had the item "for a while" (Incident 171956)."

**VQMS Response:** The program adheres to a minimum of a 1 staff to 8 youth ratio. The program provides L&M a tentative weekly program-staffing schedule in advance to ensure compliance. The program administration has implemented daily staff circles and weekly team trainings to ensure that compliance issues are adhered to. Topics include but are not limited to Child Development, Group Dynamics, Supervision, Professional boundaries and logbooks. The training

logs are maintained in the training binder. In addition to the daily review of the master logbook, the Program Administrator or the designee conducts daily camera reviews. The reviewer selects random times in the day and or night to monitor accuracy of supervision. The reviewer documents the review on the Camera Review Log. Facility searches are now completed at a minimum weekly and documented on the program's search log. After each off-property activity and on site visitation, each youth is searched and the search is documented in the search log. The program also coordinates with the Dorchester County Sheriff's department to conduct monthly search trainings for their K-9's and are available to the program at times of concern or need.

During recent investigations of contraband through visitation, the program has instituted additional processes to decrease the possibilities of items entering during family visits. There has been an increase in communication prior to visitation with families, there are staff members strategically placed throughout the facility, and additional supervision measures instituted to reduce the opportunities for visitors to bring or leave contraband items in the facility. All visitors are required to remain in the visitation area and are escorted to and from by staff in the event they need to leave the assigned area. After each visit to include home visits, each youth is searched and the search is documented in the search log.

**DJS Response:** L&M reviews all VQMS incident reports for compliance. L&M conducts follow up on all incidents. L&M reviews incidents weekly and found during our review of one incident that VQMS provided inadequate supervision of youth and failed to maintain appropriate staff to student ratio. L&M requested a Corrective Action Plan (CAP) for non-compliance with COMAR 14.31.06. VQMS provided L&M with an acceptable CAP. The program is currently in compliance with the CAP as written and L&M will continue to monitor to ensure compliance. L&M meets with the program weekly, as well as monitors the weekly staff schedule to ensure that the program has adequate staffing. L&M continues to monitor the concerns related to contraband and continues to work with the program in reference to youth and program searches. During monitoring visits, L&M has reviewed documentation of youth and facility searches. To address the concerns related to contraband, the program has implemented the following that requires that all youth return from their home pass during daylight hours to improve visibility and upon return the program will conduct a search of the parking lot, main camp road and surrounding areas. In addition, the local K9 unit will conduct monthly searches of all buildings on campus, and cameras will be repositioned to capture transitioning of individuals and vehicles from the parking area to the welcome center. L&M will continue to monitor the program and offer technical assistance as needed to ensure that the program provides adequate supervision and searches are conducted and documented as required.

3. "A well-regarded on-site equine therapeutic program has not been consistently offered due to staffing and other issues. This programming constituted an important part of the treatment services available at Morningstar and should be reinstated and be regularly available to youth at Morningstar."

**VQMS Response:** This reporting period included the winter months. This weather is not conducive for riding. There are other therapeutic services that were offered during this time. Youth have regular access to the horses and are included in the feeding, watering and general care of the animals. The program has regular on-site visits by a veterinarian and farrier of which the youth participate in. Once the weather becomes more conducive, the actual riding component will begin.

**DJS Response:** L&M continues to monitor to ensure VQMS is in compliance with COMAR 14.31.06 and VQMS policies as it relates to providing youth with a range of indoor and outdoor recreation and leisure activities.

### **One Love Group Home**

#### **Page 54**

1. "One Love struggled to provide structure, supervision, and services to keep kids engaged in (and motivated to complete) the program during 2022. All three youth placed at One Love through DJS during. The fourth quarter of 2022 ran away from the group home."

To improve program services for adjudicated youth placed at One Love, administrators should consider:

"Enhancing structure and supervision at the group home to help prevent AWOLs and theft inside the home (which was also an issue during 2022)."

**One Love Response:** One Love Group Home is a structured group home that provides each youth with an individual treatment plan that meets the youth's needs. If a youth wants to AWOL from the program, the staff are trained to divert the youth's attention from leaving the program as much as possible. In two of the three situations, the youth had a history of AWOLs from past programs. We accepted the youth in the program in order to work with them even with their past AWOL histories. In all cases, we believe the youth may have been influenced by family and or friends to AWOL from the group home. OLGH Administration has spoken with staff on AWOL prevention and how to best support residents who are struggling with rules and impulsive behavior. While OLGH has a strong record of staff training and support, the house manager and case manager increased contact and supervision in response to past AWOLs.

Due to those AWOLs - all of which took staff by surprise as the youths were not having obvious difficulties at One Love Group Home - is reassessing its policy related to youth with a lengthy history of AWOL behavior.

**DJS Response:** L&M observed an increase in AWOL incidents since the program began admitting Department of Human Services (DHS) placed youth. In September 2022, L&M met with program staff to discuss the increase in AWOLs. L&M provided technical assistance and discussed ways

the program could work to decrease AWOLs. Since that time, the program has seen a decrease in incidents. L&M has followed up on each of the incidents mentioned above and found that the program followed all policies and procedure during the incidents and there were no COMAR violations.

2. "Hiring a full-time mental health clinician to reside at the home during waking hours so that youth can have a professional clinical resource they can access regularly;"

**One Love Response:** We currently have a Therapist, Margaret Kroen LCSW-C, who provides clinical services to our youth twenty hours per week. She is available on site or by phone to assist the program when a crisis arises. We also contract with Lewis Mental Health Services and they meet with the youth individually on a weekly basis.

**DJS Response:** L&M will note that the program has a therapist who provides clinical services twenty hours per week and in times of crisis. In addition, DHS youths that have been admitted were receiving one- on-one services.

3. "Developing and updating a recreation and enrichment schedule on a weekly basis with robust offerings to keep kids constructively occupied after-school and on weekends;"

**One Love Response:** On a weekly basis, the program takes the youth out on trips and outing/ such as going out to dinner at local restaurants, to the movies, bowling, skating, Sky Zone Trampoline Park and the Mall. Throughout the week, the program staff get input from the youth about activities and the staff schedule the activities according to the youth's personal schedule. Some youth work and some go to school throughout the week. The only free time the youth get is on the weekends.

**DJS Response:** During the most recent L&M visit On March 9, 2023, three DHS youth were interviewed and they stated that they have no concerns with the program at this time.

4. "Installing cameras in common living areas and also installing exterior facing security cameras;"

**One Love Response:** We are currently exploring the possibility of installing cameras for the group home and it has been placed on the Agenda for the next board meeting. Next meeting is scheduled for March 29, 2023.

**DJS Response:** L&M will note that COMAR regulations do not require cameras. However, if the program board approves for the installation of cameras, L&M will ensure that the program creates a policy in reference to recording, storage, and monitoring of the footage.

5. “Tackling and removing obstacles to enrolling kids in local school and therapeutic services in a timely manner. One youth who ran away during the fourth quarter of 2022 was at the group home for over three weeks and had not been enrolled in a local high school. Another runaway with a trauma history was at the home for over two months before he was linked up with a mental health therapist in the surrounding community.”

**One Love Response:** The youth in question was denied enrollment into two schools, and we were working with Baltimore City Public Schools about this process before the youth left the program.

In reference to the second youth, there was a lapse in his insurance, which prevented the youth from meeting with a therapist off site. In the meantime, One Love connected the youth with our Case Worker Margaret Ann Kroen, LCSW-C, who provided services on a weekly basis. The youths are offered substance abuse therapy at Positive Steps with Elizabeth O’Donnell CAC-AD, MS.

**DJS Response:** L&M conducts weekly meetings with One Love. During these meetings, the education component of each youth is reviewed. There are sometimes barriers to the youth being enrolled in school immediately. However, the program works to address the concerns timely. L&M will continue to monitor this area.



# **JUVENILE SERVICES EDUCATION PROGRAM – RESPONSE**

## **Juvenile Services Education Program Response**

### **Vacancies**

Local school districts across the state are struggling to recruit and retain qualified teaching staff due to the lack of qualified and certified candidates. JSEP is encountering the same issue and we continue to work with Human Resources to strengthen our recruitment plan and discuss ways to retain qualified teachers. JSEP staff continues to participate in statewide hiring events in which candidates are interviewed and screened at the event. JSEP is currently working with teacher preparation institutes across the state. This should increase our access to graduating licensed teachers, counselors, and school psychologists as well as provide avenues for our conditional teachers to become fully licensed.

JSEP Leadership participated in Bowie State's workshop for conditionally licensed teachers. All JSEP coordinators have reached out to the surrounding area teacher preparation programs to speak with their deans about our employment opportunities. The JSEP Coordinators are also taking a more direct strategy by meeting with graduating students in school counseling programs at Frostburg State and The George Washington University to discuss the benefits of working in JSEP Schools.

### **Library**

Access to library material is an integral part of students becoming college and career ready. JSEP's goal is to not only to provide students with leisure reading material but to also provide access to research material that supports the curriculum. We are in the process of procuring a new library system as well as a new library collection for BCJJC. In the meantime, the Library Coordinator implemented a process for students to request books they would like to read. All schools have access to a form which allows a student to request a book, the request is approved by the Library Coordinator, ordered online and delivered to the student in the facility. JSEP students have made 109 requests, 48 were approved and delivered. We are currently in the process of procuring 23 additional titles that have been requested by students. Books may not be approved due to content or language, but the library coordinator provides the requestor with a list of appropriate books that are of similar interest. For students who do not know what books to ask for, the library coordinator provides a list of suggestions by genre. Students at Cheltenham and Green Ridge also received additional books obtained via donation.

DJS will also be working with Reginald Dwayne Betts and the nationally acclaimed Freedom Reads project to install custom designed and built library units in living units within its facilities. (See: <https://freedomreads.org/>).

## **GED Preparation and Testing**

A new GED administrator has been hired and certified as a tester for the central region and the job posting for another GED administrator to service the western part of the state is active. Additional computers have been designated to be used as GED mobile labs. Once those computers are imaged and ready, JSEP will have the ability to test 10 students a day in our mobile labs. Once these additional mobile lab computers are ready, students will no longer need to be transported to Hickey to test.

## **Career Technology Education**

A Career Technology Education Coordinator has been hired by JSEP and he is tasked with increasing the number of opportunities for post-secondary students as well as creating new community partnerships. As of this writing, there are 14 post-secondary students between the nine facilities, four of those are at Backbone where they do go off campus for school at Garrett Community College and one post-secondary student at Green Ridge. Four post-secondary students are at WMCC and are enrolled in Frederick Community College. The other five post-secondary students are enrolled between five detention centers.

## **Community Partnerships**

JSEP continues to expand their community partnerships. There are currently Memorandums of Understanding Agreements with three additional community colleges waiting to be signed in the new fiscal year. A CTE coordinator has been hired by JSEP and he will be tasked with expanding our community partnerships. JSEP has continued to partner with DJS on the virtual Career Exploration Guest Speaker Series. The most recent speakers included a physician's assistant, interior designer, attorney, and a web services sales representative.

## **Post-Secondary Options**

The JSEP administration will continue to work with school personnel to ensure all graduates are participating in the minimum of 2.5 daily hours of meaningful opportunities as required by law, and by the JSEP policy. The following are the post-secondary options available to JSEP high-school graduates:

Frederick Community College  
Garrett Community College  
Accuplacer Preparation and Testing  
Code.org  
Conover Work Place Readiness Job Readiness Series  
CPR/First Aid  
Flagger  
OSHA 10

OSHA 30  
ServSafe Food Handler  
ServSafe Manager

### **Wi-Fi**

The use of instructional materials delivered to the units has decreased with the number of COVID cases, shortened quarantine times, and the increased ability to use virtual classes. The Office of Information Technology is continuing work on the Wi-Fi Expansion projects to mitigate challenges to provide in-person instruction for youth on quarantine.

### **Transition**

Transition is a focus of both JSEP and DJS. It is working well for students in placement when both JSEP and DJS can plan ahead for a student's release. Transition from large detention centers is a more difficult process primarily because students do not have a scheduled departure date for returning to the community. SB 497 directed that all students be dually enrolled in their home school as well as their JSEP school, until they are adjudicated. This would include most of the students in the detention centers. Students who leave while dually enrolled should be able to return to their home school upon release.

JSEP has been working on a Memorandum of Agreements (MOA) with the 24 Local Education Agencies to help clarify the dual enrollment component of the law. Once all the MOAs are in place and understood, transition from detention facilities will become seamless.

### **Grade Level Classes**

A pilot program for grouping students in classes by grade level classes is underway at Green Ridge and will be starting in April at Backbone. JSEP will be monitoring these pilots to ensure best practices as we look to implement grade level grouping across the system.

### **Academic Tutoring**

As part of a grant, we have requested TutorMe which will be in schools starting during the summer session. TutorMe provides 24/7 one to one tutoring in all academic areas for over 3,000 high school classes.

### **School Climate**

A positive school climate is one in which students are challenged academically while feeling supported in a safe and welcoming environment. JSEP feels that the cornerstone of creating that environment was the development of a rich, relevant and engaging curriculum. The initial units of a rich, usable curriculum for all courses in math, science, social studies, and English was implemented this quarter. Our Library

Coordinator is currently in the process of rebuilding our school libraries, in addition new interactive boards have been ordered for all of our schools. JSEP School Counselors have administered 400 state assessments to our students during the mandated state test administration.

JSEP has budgeted money in recently submitted grants to enhance school culture through quarterly parent engagement programs at all facilities.

### **Shelter care response from Hickey**

Records are requested for students in the Shelter Care program housed at Hickey in the same way that we do for students in detention. Until records are received, students are given an initial intake packet made up of a variety of assessments, including math, reading, and various social emotional well-being instruments. Once records are received, students are enrolled in virtual courses with instruction being delivered via Chromebook.

In addition to student's virtual teachers, staff from the Peabody School rotates to the Shelter several days per week. Students with IEP's are also serviced by special education staff, our school psychologist, guidance counselor, and other related services staff if needed. Direct care staff assigned to the Shelter also maintain regular contact with the school and support students in their learning throughout the school day.