

**JUVENILE JUSTICE MONITORING UNIT
STATE OF MARYLAND**

2020 SECOND QUARTER REPORT

[The Maryland Juvenile Justice Monitoring Unit \(JJMU\)](#)

The Juvenile Justice Monitoring Unit (JJMU) is an independent state agency housed in the Office of the Maryland Attorney General. The JJMU is responsible for reporting on Maryland Department of Juvenile Services (DJS) operated and licensed facilities across the state. Monitors from the unit conduct visits to these sites unannounced 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 video 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 Maryland State Department of Education (which is responsible for education services in DJS facilities) are included within the 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 independent monitoring agency increase the transparency and accountability of the 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 and promising practices that serve to both enhance public safety and produce positive outcomes for young people in contact with the juvenile justice system.

JJMU Second Quarter 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 2020 second quarter reports.

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

The JJMU 2020 Second Quarter Report was produced by Margi Joshi, Nick Moroney, Tim Snyder, and Marvin Stone. Thanks to Taran Henley, Fritz Schantz, and Maria Welker for technical assistance.

We respectfully submit this report to the Governor, the members of the Maryland General Assembly, the Secretary of the Department of Juvenile Services, and the members of 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 through our website at:

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



NICK MORONEY
Director

STATE OF MARYLAND
JUVENILE JUSTICE MONITORING UNIT

September 2020

The Honorable Lawrence J. Hogan, Jr., 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

The Members of the Maryland General Assembly

The Honorable Sam J. Abed, Secretary
Department of Juvenile Services

The Members of the State Advisory Board for Juvenile Services
c/o The Maryland Department of Juvenile Services

Dear Governor Hogan, Senate President Ferguson, Speaker of the House Jones, Members of the General Assembly, Secretary Abed and State Advisory Board Members:

Enclosed is the Juvenile Justice Monitoring Unit's 2020 second quarter report which offers an update on conditions in Department of Juvenile Services' (DJS) operated and licensed facilities.

Juvenile justice stakeholders throughout the Maryland juvenile justice system have, in recent months, been collaboratively and successfully working to lower the populations of youth in DJS detention and placement centers during the COVID-19 pandemic. To accomplish such de facto system reform, stakeholders have apportioned greater weight than before to the utilization of alternatives to incarceration which emphasize the physical and mental wellbeing of youth.

While, throughout the pandemic, many decision makers have contributed to successful efforts to keep the numbers of young people in detention and out-of-home placement to a minimum,

DJS has made diligent efforts to keep youth who are incarcerated as safe as possible from COVID-19 through testing efforts, contact tracing within facilities, cleaning protocols, and containment measures to prevent widespread infection. Unfortunately, the nature of institutionalization in congregate facilities makes it inherently difficult to contain outbreaks or prevent the spread of disease, and upticks in infection rates for youth and staff at DJS facilities occurred during the reporting period.

The circumstances of the current health crisis have demonstrated that the need is more pressing than ever to ensure the continuation and deepening of systemic reforms which utilize specialized and individualized alternatives to incarceration that enable youth to remain in or close to their homes and communities.

Avoiding incarcerating young people whenever possible and instead offering support and resources to help youth and families and enhance community safety (as has been happening during the pandemic) is in keeping with the mission and mandate of the juvenile justice system. The juvenile justice system exists to enable decisions (by courts, law enforcement, state agencies and other system stakeholders) that are based on the best interests of the young people with whom they come into contact.

The reform efforts must continue and be institutionalized in Maryland and the legislatively enabled Maryland Juvenile Justice Reform Council can play a major role in making sure such reforms are made permanent.

Inside DJS detention and placement facilities, in-person education services were frequently disrupted during the reporting period due to concerns about the spread of COVID-19 among educators, other facility personnel and youth. In lieu of instruction, the Maryland State Department of Education (which is responsible for education services in DJS facilities) sent packets of worksheets for students to try and complete on their own or with the help of DJS line staff. Reliance on packet work is not an appropriate or sustainable educational strategy for overcoming limitations in school operations due to the current pandemic.

However belatedly, MSDE leadership must (without further delay) prioritize planning for the continuous operation of school services and should commit to ensuring in-person instruction in DJS facilities whenever possible during the fall and spring school semesters. Further elongated disruptions to in-person education programming is likely inevitable due to the recurring presence of infection at detention and placement facilities and so MSDE must institute a carefully and thoughtfully pre-planned, comprehensive and individualized virtual teaching system. To disregard the likelihood that such a scenario will materialize and to ignore the need for a backup virtual-based teaching strategy is tantamount to the abandonment of responsibility for student progress by an agency which bears responsibility to ensure the individual education needs of all the students in their care are met.

Respectfully submitted,

Nick Moroney

Nick Moroney
Director
Maryland Juvenile Justice Monitoring Unit

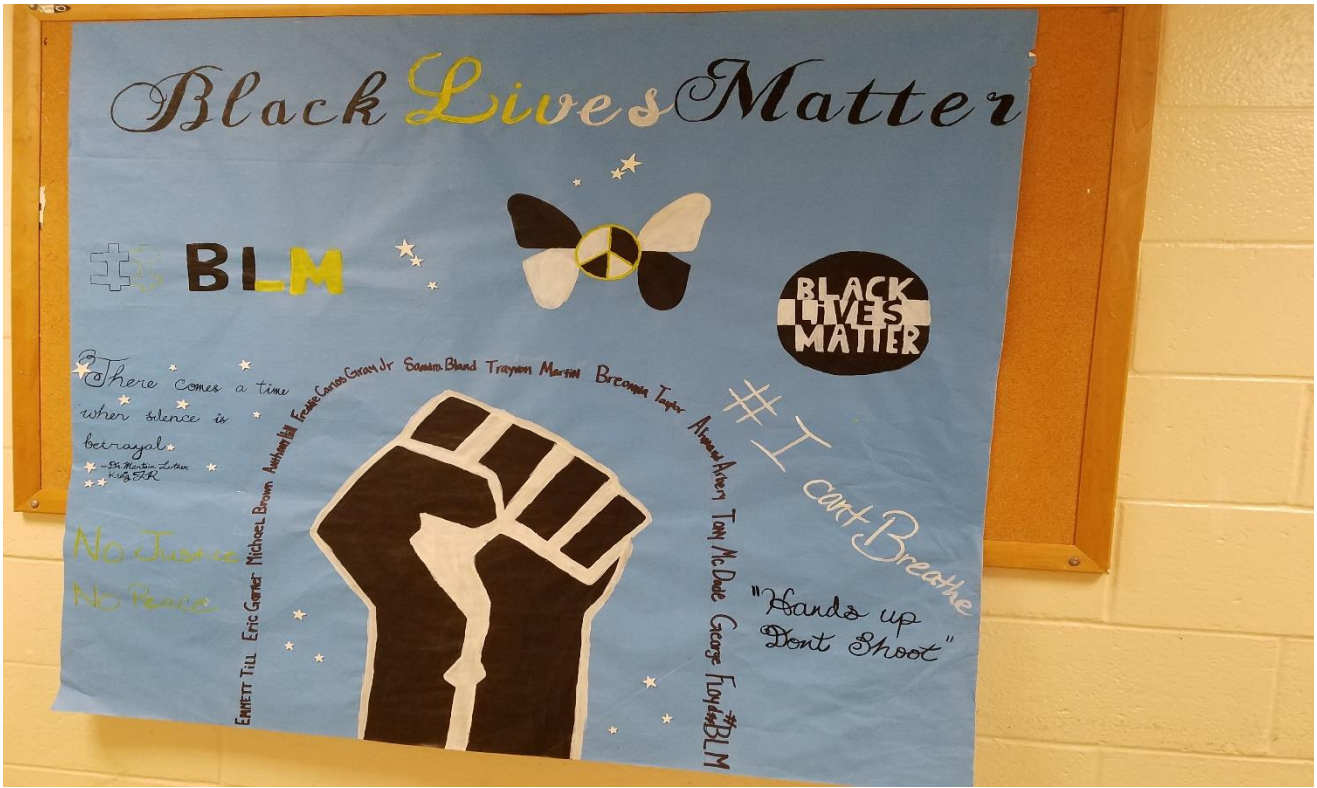
Cc: Attorney General Brian Frosh
Chief Deputy Attorney General Elizabeth Harris
Deputy Attorney General Carolyn Quattrocki
State of Maryland Treasurer's Office
The Office of the Comptroller of Maryland
Deputy Secretary Wallis Norman, Mr. Karl Pothier and Mr. Jay Cleary, DJS
Margi Joshi, Tim Snyder and Marvin Stone, JJMU

JUVENILE JUSTICE MONITORING UNIT 2020 SECOND QUARTER REPORT

TABLE OF CONTENTS

INCIDENT AND POPULATION TRENDS	1
COVID-19 RESPONSE IN JUVENILE SERVICES' FACILITIES	2
COMMITTED PLACEMENT	7
Victor Cullen (Hardware Secure)	8
Savage Mountain (Hardware Secure).....	10
Youth Centers x3 (Staff Secure).....	12
Silver Oak Academy (Staff Secure)	15
J. DeWeese Carter Center (Hardware Secure)	17
DETENTION CENTERS	20
Baltimore City Juvenile Justice Center	21
Cheltenham Youth Detention Center	23
Charles H. Hickey, Jr., School	25
Thomas J.S. Waxter Children's Center.....	28
Alfred D. Noyes Children's Center	30
Lower Eastern Shore Children's Center	32
Western Maryland Children's Center	34
SMALLER FACILITY UPDATES	36
MARYLAND STATE DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION IN DJS FACILITIES	38
DJS RESPONSE TO THIS REPORT	42
MSDE JSES RESPONSE TO THIS REPORT	56

Artwork from Children at Noyes Detention Center



DJS Secure Detention Centers

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)
- Alfred D. Noyes Children's Center (Noyes)
- Western Maryland Children's Center (WMCC)
- Lower Eastern Shore Children's Center (LESCC)

DJS Committed Placement Centers

Long-term, post-disposition

- Victor Cullen Center (Cullen)
- Savage Mountain (Savage)
- J. DeWeese Carter Center (Carter)
- Backbone Mountain, Green Ridge, Meadow Mountain youth centers (Three youth centers)
- Silver Oak Academy (SOA – DJS Licensed)

Incident and Population Trends

Second quarter 2020 population and incident trends versus second quarter of 2019:

- ✓ Average daily population (ADP) of young people decreased at all DJS-operated secure detention centers and at all DJS-operated placement centers.
- ✓ Youth on youth fights and assaults decreased in secure detention at BCJJC, Hickey, Waxter, Noyes and WMCC and in committed placement at Cullen, the three youth centers and SOA. There were no youth on youth fights and assaults at Carter committed placement center for girls.
- ✓ Physical restraints decreased in secure detention at BCJJC, Hickey, Waxter, Noyes and WMCC and at all DJS-operated and at DJS-licensed committed placement centers.
- ✓ The use of mechanical restraints (handcuffs and/or leg irons) inside facilities decreased in secure detention at BCJJC and in committed placement at Savage. Mechanical restraints were not used inside CYDC, Hickey, LESCC, and WMCC secure detention centers or at the Carter committed placement center for girls during the second quarter.
- ✓ The use of seclusion in response to youth behavior decreased in secure detention at BCJJC and Hickey. Seclusion was not used at LESCC and WMCC detention centers or at the Carter committed placement center for girls.
- Youth on youth fights increased in secure detention at Hickey and in committed placement at Savage.
- Mechanical restraints usage inside facilities increased in secure detention at Waxter and Noyes and in committed placement at Cullen and the three youth centers.
- Seclusions increased in secure detention at CYDC, Waxter, and Noyes and in committed placement at Cullen and Savage.
- There were 15 incidents involving suicide ideation and 16 incidents of self-injurious behavior at DJS-operated facilities during the second quarter of 2020.

COVID-19 RESPONSE IN JUVENILE SERVICES' FACILITIES

COVID-19 Response in Juvenile Services' Facilities

The COVID-19 outbreak continues in Maryland and across the county. Restrictions to help quell the spread of the virus in DJS facilities pose significant hardships for confined youth.

- ☒ At time of writing (August 27, 2020), 34 youth in DJS-operated and DJS-licensed facilities have tested positive for COVID-19.¹ Youth who test positive are placed in medical isolation and are required to stay inside their cell for 23 to 24 hours per day for up to two weeks. 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 deleterious effects of prolonged isolation.

- ☒ As the number of those infected or potentially exposed to COVID-19 has increased, youth inside DJS facilities have been required to spend significant and increasing amounts of time in quarantine. During quarantine, movement is severely restricted and youth are required to eat, sleep, complete educational packets, and to spend leisure time in their pod or unit. On some days, youth are permitted supervised time (up to an hour) outside on facility grounds or inside walled areas of facilities open to the sky, but the availability of outdoor recreation is dependent on adequate staffing and on the outside temperature being below 90 degrees. All new arrivals at DJS facilities spend up to two weeks in quarantine. Quarantine is also required any time youth are assessed as having been potentially exposed to a COVID-19 positive peer or staff member. At time of writing (August 27, 2020), 71 DJS staff and Maryland State Department of Education Juvenile Services Education System (MSDE JSES is responsible for education services at all DJS operated facilities) personnel have tested positive for COVID-19.² As and when the number of staff infections grow, mandated time on quarantine increases. Young people in quarantine have reported high stress levels, boredom, depression, and anxiety. During the reporting period, young people at BCJJC, the site of the largest outbreak of the COVID-19 in a DJS-operated facility, were (and continue to be) especially apprehensive due to uncertainty about their health status and the occurrence of issues related to access to clean masks and disinfecting supplies (see BCJJC, p. 21).

¹ Updated numbers of staff and youth who have tested positive for COVID-19 in DJS facilities can be found under DJS COVID-19 stats at <https://djs.maryland.gov/Pages/COVID-19.aspx>

² Ibid.

- ☒ Youth not confined to their cell are required to wear masks anytime they leave their cells (which can mean up to 12 or more hours per day) including when entering a communal day room, attending classes, going to recreation, and engaging in leisure time on a living unit. Incarcerated young people are also responsible for washing their masks and keeping their cells and residential units clean on a daily basis. Failure to follow facility rules can lead to disciplinary reports, loss of privileges, and potentially increase the time that a youth is incarcerated.

- ☒ Youth throughout the system have requested more family contact. At time of writing (late August of 2020), in-person family visitation has again ceased at all DJS facilities. In response, the Department has increased the number of allotted 10-minute phone calls and virtual visits have also been arranged at some facilities for families who have access to the necessary technology. However, frequent contact with family members depends on the availability of case management staff to help facilitate phone calls and virtual contact.

- ☒ Basic hygiene services such as haircuts and hair care services were not provided during the reporting period.

- ☒ Persistent boredom and lack of meaningful activities and incentives were already a major concern for institutionalized young people in pre-pandemic times. Youth boredom and disengagement has been heightened during the COVID-19 emergency with the institution of new rules which ban youth in DJS placement facilities from:
 - attending any off-grounds activities;
 - consuming any foodstuff brought from outside;
 - engaging in any interactive sports inside facilities including basketball;
 - using recreation equipment such as basketballs (even including solo basketball practice at some facilities); and
 - playing card games.

Programming and special events conducted by outside vendors and visitors to help reduce downtime and decrease the monotony of institutionalization have also been discontinued.

- ☒ Education services inside DJS facilities are provided by the Maryland State Department of Education Juvenile Services Education System (MSDE JSES) and there have been frequent disruptions to academic instruction. From early April until the summer session

began in July, youth did not have access to in-person education staff for instruction or assistance with school work. Students attended virtual lectures (often presented by teachers students did not know) for just a few hours each week. During the remainder of the designated six-hour school day, students were reduced to attempting to complete packets of worksheets on their own (or with help from some DJS line staff). The packets were handed out for months (while teachers were not in facilities) but were not graded until July. During periods of quarantine or medical isolation, youth received these packets for use in their cell or on their living unit. Although in-person instruction resumed briefly for a summer session beginning in July, summer classes have been cancelled (as of early August) at BCJJC and Waxter following school personnel testing positive for the coronavirus. Young people in DJS facilities who had already earned a high school diploma and were interested in college courses experienced delays in enrolling in online college classes and difficulties accessing online coursework on a consistent basis. When high school level classes are in session, most youth with high school diplomas are forced to sit in on high school classes.

DJS has sought to prevent widespread infection and made diligent efforts to keep youth safe from contracting COVID-19 through testing efforts, contact tracing within facilities, cleaning protocols, and containment measures. Unfortunately, the nature of institutionalization in congregate facilities makes it inherently difficult to contain outbreaks or prevent the spread of disease. Given the likely long-term nature of the current health crisis, emphasis should be placed on minimizing the physical and emotional toll of incarceration on young people. In this regard, DJS should consider:

- Continuing efforts to work with juvenile justice stakeholders in order to keep the numbers of young people in detention and out-of-home placement to a minimum.
- Developing a robust set of options for meaningful and creative incentives and activities which facilities can use as a guide to keep youth engaged and active, especially during periods of quarantine. For youth in DJS' remote staff secure placement sites, ease restrictions on off-campus activities to allow for outdoor recreation such as hiking, swimming, and fishing. These pastimes can be conducted using social distancing and the risk of virus transmission is also mitigated by emphasizing outdoor over indoor activities.
- Establishing a forum for all DJS facility administrators to share ideas about creative and interactive programming that meet DJS COVID-19 guidelines and which have been successfully implemented at their own facilities. For example, girls at the Waxter facility enjoy doing arts and crafts projects using materials supplied by facility administrators. At the Noyes facility, administrators initiated a proactive collaboration between facility

leadership and mental health and education staff to develop a series of activities for youth to participate in based on youth and staff interest in learning about the Black Lives Matter movement.

- Closely collaborating with MSDE JSES to coordinate the implementation of appropriate, individualized education services and help MSDE in the development of contingency plans (including the use of virtual instruction) when in-person school services are disrupted.
- Encouraging consistent interaction with mental health staff to ensure that youth receive individualized support and care. The currently reduced numbers of youth in detention and placement provides an ideal opportunity to deliver more intensive and personalized services for youth.
- Providing youth with personal devices such as Chromebooks and with routine access to cell phones to allow them to keep in touch everyday with families through email, video chat, and phone calls. While youth are subject to excessive downtime, case management (those responsible for organizing extra calls) are facing increased workloads including sorting out the logistics (on the DJS end) of facilitating the increasing number of court hearings and community case management meetings being held virtually. It makes sense to provide equipment and agency to youth so they can maintain consistent contact with their loved ones without mandating that they (unnecessarily) take up case management time.

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. African American youth represented 81% of total entries during the second quarter of 2020 compared to 71% in the second quarter of 2019. Hispanic/Latino youth represented 10% of youth entries during the current reporting period compared to 11% during the same time in 2019.

Victor Cullen – Selected Incident Categories	Q2 2018	Q2 2019	Q2 2020
Average Daily Population (ADP)	15	22	15
1. Youth on Youth Assault/Fight	3	22	10
2. Alleged Youth on Staff Assault	5	5	4
3. Physical Restraint	25	41	39
4. Use of Handcuffs and/or Shackles	22	18	20
5. Seclusion	5	5	11
6. Contraband	6	2	0
7. Suicide Ideation	1	1	0
8. Suicide Attempt	0	1	0
9. Self-Injurious Behavior	0	1	0

Average daily population (ADP) at Victor Cullen declined by 32% during the second quarter of 2020 compared to the second quarter of 2019, while the number of incidents involving youth on youth fights or assaults decreased by 55%. Despite the significant reduction in population, physical restraints of youth by staff declined only slightly (by 5%), use of mechanical restraints (handcuffs and/or leg irons) on youth by staff inside the facility increased, and instances of seclusion more than doubled when comparing the two time periods.

Program

The significant reduction in population and the resulting lowering of staff to youth ratios has led to a more stabilized culture at Cullen. In addition, the hiring of mental health staff has improved treatment resources. The Department should take the opportunity of the low population to revamp the program at Cullen. The current compliance-oriented points and levels system is predicated on the use of directives, restraints and seclusion to control youth behavior. In its place, DJS should adopt a trauma-informed and evidence-based approach that provides for individualization of treatment goals based on the personal needs, strengths, capabilities, and interests of each child.

Excessive downtime and lack of constructive programming continues to be an issue at Cullen and one that has been further exacerbated by COVID-19 restrictions. Woodworking and epoxy art activities for youth are not held consistently due to the unavailability of trained staff. A well-attended dialogue circle with mentors from local communities had to be discontinued due to prohibitions on outside visitors. Administrators at Cullen should establish and utilize a broad coalition of facility staff (mental health, case management, recreation, direct-care) to develop a variety of activities that youth can engage in safely.

Education

For information on education in DJS facilities, see the MSDE JSES section of this report which begins on page 38.

Savage Mountain (renamed Garrett Children’s Center, effective July 1, 2020)

The Savage Mountain facility, located in Allegheny 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. African American youth represented 88% of entries during the second quarter of 2020 compared to 100% of youth entries in the second quarter of 2019.

Savage Mountain	Q2 ³ 2018	Q2 2019	Q2 2020
Average Daily Population (ADP)		7	4
1. Youth on Youth Assault/Fight		2	6
2. Alleged Youth on Staff Assault		2	0
3. Physical Restraint		21	6
4. Use of Handcuffs and/or Shackles		8	2
5. Seclusion		0	1
6. Contraband		0	4
7. Suicide Ideation		3	0
8. Suicide Attempt		0	0
9. Self-Injurious Behavior		0	0

Average daily population (ADP) at Savage Mountain decreased by 3 (from 7 to 4) in the second quarter of 2020 compared to the second quarter of 2019 while physical restraints and use of mechanical restraints (handcuffs and/or leg irons) on youth by staff inside the facility decreased substantially. Youth fights and assaults increased by 4.

³ Savage Mountain was closed for renovation from September 2017 to December 2018 to convert the physical plant to a maximum security facility.

Youth at Savage Mountain were moved to a unit at Victor Cullen, the hardware secure placement site located in Frederick County, and remained there for the majority of the second quarter of 2020. Case management and direct-care staff from Savage Mountain also temporarily relocated and continued to work with the youth from Savage while they were housed at Cullen. The relocation was a precautionary move to free up the physical plant for possible use during the Covid-19 pandemic. Savage was chosen because of the small population of youth housed there during the quarter.

For information on education in DJS facilities, see the MSDE JSES section of this report which begins on page 38.

Youth Centers X3

Three staff secure (not fenced and locked) facilities for boys (collectively referred to as the youth centers) were in operation in western Maryland during the second quarter of 2020. Each of these centers is owned and operated by the Maryland Department of Juvenile Services (DJS/the Department). The facilities are: Green Ridge (40-bed capacity); Meadow Mountain (40 beds); and Backbone Mountain (48 beds). African American youth represented 64% of total youth center entries to these facilities in the second quarter of 2020 compared to 68% during the same period in 2019. Latino/Hispanic youth represented 13% of youth entries in the second quarter of 2020, a decrease of 4% compared with the same period in 2019.

Meadow Mountain Youth Center was permanently closed at the end of June 2020. Youth at Meadow Mountain were transferred to Green Ridge Youth Center to complete their time in placement.

Combined Youth Centers (x3) – Selected Incident Categories	Q2 2018	Q2 2019	Q2 2020
Average Daily Population (ADP)	85	88	33
1. Youth on Youth Assault/Fight	48	51	2
2. Alleged Youth on Staff Assault	13	3	4
3. Physical Restraint	148	98	42
4. Use of Handcuffs and/or Shackles	35	11	14
5. Seclusion	0	0	0
6. Contraband	3	7	2
7. Suicide Ideation	13	8	1
8. Suicide Attempt	0	0	0
9. Self-Injurious Behavior	1	1	0

The combined average daily population, youth fights and assaults and physical restraints of youth by staff at the three youth centers decreased substantially in the second quarter of 2020 compared to the second quarter of 2019. The numbers of youth sent to out-of-home placement in DJS facilities including the youth centers has decreased and youth populations should be kept as low as possible to ensure that alternatives to incarceration are being appropriately utilized as well as to guard against the infection of youth and staff. The significant reductions in population and the resulting lowering of staff to youth ratios has led to more individualized attention and intensive mental health supports for young people at the youth centers.

Excessive downtime at the youth centers leading to boredom, anxiety, and acting out behaviors is a problem which predates the COVID-19 emergency. However, the restrictions imposed on young people in placement in response to the pandemic have exacerbated the longstanding issue. While combined populations of youth have fallen substantially at the three facilities, staff use of mechanical restraints (handcuffs and/or leg irons) on youth inside the centers increased by 27% when comparing the second quarter of 2020 with the same period last year (even as the population decreased by over 60%).

At Backbone Mountain Youth Center, youth cannot engage in off campus activities such as nature walks and hiking as they once did and recreational equipment such as basketballs and playing cards are banned (Grievance 16514, 16516, 16532). The Department should consider lifting restrictions on pastimes which youth can participate in while maintaining social distance. Green Ridge Youth Center, for example, is located next to a state forest which can be safely utilized for outdoor activities such as hiking, biking, and fishing.

The majority of youth separated from their loved ones and sent to placement far from home are young people of color whose lives, families, and communities have been significantly impacted by structural and institutional racism. Even so, staff at the youth centers do not receive specialized training in addressing issues of race or help in understanding the effects of racism on youth development.

Youth in DJS operated facilities have consistently expressed interest in learning about the Black Lives Matter movement at school and outside school hours. During a monitoring visit in the second quarter, young people incarcerated at the youth centers asked to be informed about recent protests across the country and said they want to engage in structured community dialogue about race and racism.

In Grievance 16495, a staffer tore down and threw away a Black Lives Matter poster that several youth had made to hang up in their dorm room. For some time following the incident, management and staff did not process with the youth about the staffer's actions. Instead, and citing safety and security concerns, the superintendent backed the staffer's approach but did indicate that support of the Black Lives Matter movement could occur within approved contexts and under staff supervision. However, no structured activities, formal events, or extended conversations about the Black Lives Matter movement were initiated during the reporting period at the facility where the poster was torn down.

The Department should provide its entire staff with the support, tools, resources, and training to assist youth in learning about social justice and encourage the young people in their care to explore personal life experiences in the context of issues of race and inequity and the current dialogue and actions taking place around the nation.

For more information on education services in DJS facilities, see page 38.

Silver Oak Academy

Silver Oak Academy (SOA), 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. African American youth committed to SOA through DJS represented 86% of entries during the second quarter of 2020 compared to 88% during the same period in 2019.

SOA – Selected Incident Categories	Q2 2018	Q2 2019	Q2 2020
Average Daily Population (ADP)	35	40	25
1. Youth on Youth Assault/Fight	12	15	6
2. Alleged Youth on Staff Assault	4	1	0
3. Physical Restraint	10	31	6
4. Use of Handcuffs and/or Shackles	0	0	0
5. Seclusion	0	0	0
6. Contraband	14	0	2
7. Suicide Ideation	0	0	0
8. Suicide Attempt	0	0	0
9. Self-Injurious Behavior	0	0	0

The average daily population of youth placed at Silver Oak decreased by 38% in the second quarter of 2020 when compared to the second quarter of 2019. Further comparison of the same time periods shows that youth fights and assaults decreased by 60% and incidents involving physical restraints of youth by staff decreased by 81%.

Three youth escaped from the facility during the second quarter by running out of their housing unit toward the facility parking lot, where a car with an unidentified driver was waiting

for them. The incident occurred around 4:30 AM while the staff to youth ratio was three staffers for the 29 youth on campus.

An outbreak of COVID-19 occurred at the facility during the second quarter of 2020. Despite the disruption in programming due to the outbreak, a number of youth were able to continue with classwork and obtain their high school diploma through the school at Silver Oak. A virtual graduation ceremony was organized by school staff to commemorate the occasion. The Carroll County Health Department implemented universal testing for the presence of COVID-19 at Silver Oak following positive test results of symptomatic youth who had not been quarantined. All youth placed at the facility and over a third of staff tested positive. Several youth were released and sent home to quarantine. The Department of Juvenile Services sent youth who were not released by the Courts from the staff secure Silver Oak Academy to Victor Cullen, a maximum security (locked and fenced) facility, to complete their stay in placement.

As of August of 2020, there were no young people placed through DJS at Silver Oak Academy.

J. DeWeese Carter Center

The J. DeWeese Carter Center (Carter) is a maximum security committed placement center for girls and is located on Maryland's eastern shore. Carter is owned and operated by the Maryland Department of Juvenile Services (DJS/the Department) and has a DJS-rated housing capacity of 14 girls. African American youth represented 66% of total youth entries to Carter during the second quarter of 2020, compared to 58% during the same period in 2019.

Carter – Selected Incident Categories	Q2 2018	Q2 2019	Q2 2020
Average Daily Population (ADP)	6	8	3
1. Youth on Youth Assault/Fight	1	0	0
2. Alleged Youth on Staff Assault	0	0	0
3. Physical Restraint	6	10	1
4. Use of Handcuffs and/or Shackles	0	0	0
5. Seclusion	0	3	0
6. Contraband	0	0	0
7. Suicide Ideation	1	2	0
8. Suicide Attempt	0	0	0
9. Self-Injurious Behavior	0	0	0

The average daily population of youth at Carter during the second quarter of 2020 decreased by 62% compared to the second quarter of 2019. There was one physical restraint of a young person by staff during the second quarter of 2020 in comparison to 10 physical restraints during the second quarter of 2019.

The girls at Carter were transferred to Lower Eastern Shore Children's Center (LESCC) in March of 2020 due to a temporary closure of the food vendor who provided meal services to the facility. The young people from Carter stayed at LESCC until mid-May of 2020 and then returned to Carter until the facility permanently closed at the end of June. The girls at Carter were then moved again, this time further than Carter was from their local communities. They were transported to a newly established staff secure facility with dormitory style living on the grounds of the Backbone Mountain youth center in rural western Maryland. The area on the campus where the girls are housed has been named Mountain View.

Rather than adopting an individualized, relationship-centered and trauma-informed therapeutic approach specifically tailored to the needs of justice-involved girls, the approach at Mountain View has remained the same as it was at Carter. The program is again centered around a cookie cutter (non-individualized) behavior management program with a compliance-oriented points and levels system – the same system utilized at all DJS-operated placement sites. Power struggles between staff and youth were a common occurrence at Carter due to staff demands for rigid adherence to facility rules, even when such rules did not serve to preserve safety and security. During the reporting period, for example, a girl at Carter requested to take a shower during leisure time. A staffer who was present refused to let the girl take a shower because shower time was designated for evenings, according to the facility schedule. The girl became upset and started yelling at the staffer. In response, the staffer took off her jacket, sprang from her chair, called the girl a “fat bitch” and aggressively approached the youth. The staffer had to be held back by another staffer who attempted to de-escalate the tension between the girl and the irate staffer (Incident 164362). The staffer who had to be held back continues to work with youth and for DJS in a direct-care capacity at another facility.

The new program at Mountain View is controlled by the same non-individualized points and levels system as Carter and the girls moved there from Carter faced a difficult transition. Before the move, they were told by DJS administration that they were going to a less restrictive environment, however, upon arrival, MP3 players that the girls had been provided with at Carter to help pass the frequent downtime were confiscated by the facility superintendent. The devices were subsequently banned despite the fact that the youth had been using them and even though individual music players are provided to youth at some other DJS detention and placement centers (in recognition of the role that music personalized to young people's tastes can play in helping youth cope with stress). At the same time as a meaningful coping mechanism was being taken away, alternative individualized, creative and engaging activities geared to student interests were not developed to help youth to constructively occupy their time while being held at Mountain View.

Two girls placed at Mountain View in its first weeks of operation absconded from the facility within a month of their arrival (Incident 164697). One of the girls had already successfully completed the Carter program months prior to being sent to Mountain View. When asked about her reasons for running away from Mountain View, she remarked to a monitor that, “It's the same exact program as Carter, except there I don't have my own room or any privacy. What would I gain by going back there?”

Until the Department replaces its current compliance-oriented points and level system with a comprehensive gender-responsive and trauma-informed treatment program, the needs of girls in DJS placement will remain unaddressed.

For information on education services in DJS facilities, see page 38.

DETENTION CENTERS

Baltimore City Juvenile Justice Center

The Baltimore City Juvenile Justice Center (BCJJC) is a maximum security detention center for boys. The Maryland Department of Juvenile Services (DJS/the Department) owns and operates BCJJC, which has a DJS-rated housing capacity of 120 youth. African American youth represented 89% of total youth entries during the second quarter of 2020, compared to 95% during the same time period in 2019.

BCJJC – Selected Incident Categories	Q2 2018	Q2 2019	Q2 2020
Average Daily Population (ADP)	103	68	44
1. Youth on Youth Assault/Fight	66	48	30
2. Alleged Youth on Staff Assault	10	9	6
3. Physical Restraint	107	74	35
4. Use of Handcuffs and/or Shackles	23	17	9
5. Seclusion	5	13	3
6. Contraband	6	7	3
7. Suicide Ideation	2	4	1
8. Suicide Attempt	1	0	0
9. Self-Injurious Behavior	0	1	2

Average daily population (ADP) at BCJJC during the second quarter of 2019 decreased by approximately 34% when compared to the same time last year while youth on youth fights and assaults decreased by approximately 35%, instances of physical restraints of youth by staff decreased by over 50%, and the use of mechanical restraints (handcuffs and/or shackles) on youth inside the detention facility decreased by almost 50%. Additionally, the number of times

seclusion was used during the reporting period also very substantially decreased when compared to the second quarter of 2019.

Strong leadership is needed at BCJJC which, at time of writing (August 21, 2020), is the DJS-operated site with the largest number of infected staff and youth. Youth anxiety is high due to extended stints of time spent in quarantine status (and all the strictures that entails). Additionally youth reported a failure to consistently distribute new masks when those provided have become soiled or torn after repeated use; a lack of access to cleaning supplies upon request; and insufficient staff assistance and organizational structure in helping youth maintain social distance and a sanitized environment. Constructive activities were limited during the reporting period and youth report spending the majority of their time after school watching TV on the unit. When school staff were out due to risk of infection (which was during most of the second quarter), youth had even less to do to occupy their time. Administrators at BCJJC need to focus on improving and increasing communication with both youth and staff and should concentrate on providing the support and structure that youth and staff need to help them feel and be safe. Mental health providers should also be meeting and communicating with all youth on a daily basis to assist with coping and stress management – the low population provides ample opportunity for enhanced service provision.

Even though the average daily population of youth at BCJJC is significantly smaller than before the onset of the pandemic, management at BCJJC have not achieved the necessary level of collaboration with direct-care, mental health, and case management staff to insure an individualized approach to addressing the needs of youth with behavior issues. BCJJC continues to overuse the Intensive Services Unit (ISU) to control youth behavior and manage non-compliance. The ISU is a restrictive housing unit into which youth allegedly involved in aggressive incidents at the facility are placed. Administrators at BCJJC have ordered youth placed on ISU for displaying nuisance behavior and the perception among youth is that ISU is used as a punitive measure. BCJJC is the only detention center that currently utilizes an ISU.

For more information on education in DJS facilities, see page 38.

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 boys. African American youth represented 74% of total youth entries in the second quarter of 2020 versus 76% during the same period in 2019. Hispanic/Latino youth represented 17% of entries during the second quarter of 2020, up by 6% when compared with the same period last year.

CYDC– Selected Incident Categories	Q2 2018	Q2 2019	Q2 2020
Average Daily Population (ADP)	58	53	37
1. Youth on Youth Assault/Fight	31	27	27
2. Alleged Youth on Staff Assault	1	4	2
3. Physical Restraint	42	38	38
4. Use of Handcuffs and/or Shackles	1	1	0
5. Seclusion	5	2	6
6. Contraband	2	3	4
7. Suicide Ideation	0	2	1
8. Suicide Attempt	0	0	0
9. Self-Injurious Behavior	1	2	1

Average daily population in the second quarter of 2020 decreased by 30% when compared to the second quarter of 2019, however the number of youth fights and assaults and the frequency of physical restraints of youth by staff remained the same while the number of incidents involving seclusion tripled. There were no incidents involving the use of mechanical restraints (handcuffs and/or leg irons) on youth inside the facility during the second quarter.

Administrators at CYDC should continue efforts to reduce the number of fights, assaults, and restraints that occur at the facility through staff training and efforts to enhance team cohesion.

Boredom and monotony contributes to increased stress, anxiety, and frayed relations between peers on living units and the resultant tension can turn into acting out and incidents. A substantial increase in daily structured programming developed through collaboration between administrators, mental health, recreation, case management and direct-care staff would contribute to a safer facility climate.

The Maryland State Department of Education, Juvenile Services Education System (MSDE JSES) operates the school at CYDC. For information on education services in DJS facilities, see page 38.

Charles H. Hickey, Jr., School

The Charles H. Hickey, Jr., School (Hickey) in Baltimore County is a maximum security 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. African American youth accounted for 82% of entries in the second quarter of 2020, compared to 79% during the second quarter of 2019.

Hickey – Selected Incident Categories	Q2 2018	Q2 2019	Q2 2020
Average Daily Population (ADP)	60	52	36
1. Youth on Youth Assault/Fight	56	28	31
2. Alleged Youth on Staff Assault	0	0	0
3. Physical Restraint	83	35	28
4. Use of Handcuffs and/or Shackles	10	4	0
5. Seclusion	15	3	2
6. Contraband	6	5	3
7. Suicide Ideation	4	0	0
8. Suicide Attempt	0	0	0
9. Self-Injurious Behavior	0	0	0

Average daily population (ADP) in the second quarter of 2020 decreased by approximately 31% compared to the second quarter of 2019. Comparing the same two time periods, fights amongst youth increased by 11%. Physical restraints of youth by staff decreased by 20% and the number of incidents involving seclusion of youth decreased by one (from three to two). Mechanical restraints (handcuffs and/or leg irons) were not used on youth within the facility during the second quarter of 2020.

Mental Health Services

Mental health services at Hickey are provided by an outside vendor. Mental health services should be enhanced given the low population and high anxiety surrounding youth and staff infections with COVID-19 at the facility.⁴ Given the anxiety-provoking characteristics inherent in the current circumstances related to the pandemic, clinicians should, at a minimum, conduct daily check-ins with youth.

A mental health therapist - who served as the onsite supervisor of mental health staff operations at Hickey - recently resigned. There is a director of mental health who oversees mental health services on behalf of the private provider contracted for mental health-related services delivery at the three largest DJS detention facilities, BCJJC, CYDC, and Hickey. The director employed by the private provider is onsite at Hickey one to two days per week and usually for a few hours at a time. There is a need to establish positions for full-time on-site directors of mental health at Hickey, BCJJC and CYDC to coordinate mental health services, ensure the delivery of consistent, comprehensive coverage and liaise with DJS facility management and staff at each of these facilities.

During the current reporting period, several youth who were placed on quarantine at Hickey because of possible exposure to a person infected with COVID-19 commented to a monitor that they were experiencing extreme boredom. The youth said there was little in the way of constructive engagement to keep them occupied during waking hours and added that the television on one of the residential areas where youth were quarantined was broken.

Education

The Maryland State Department of Education, Juvenile Services Education System (MSDE JSES) operates the school inside the Hickey detention facility. Education services were disrupted for most of the second quarter of 2020 due to quarantine protocols requiring education staff to stay home because of the risk of potential exposure to COVID-19 at the facility. During this prolonged period, MSDE JSES administrators did not plan and coordinate with DJS staff to ensure appropriate delivery of education services and materials in the absence of in-person classes for students at Hickey. The lack of appropriate services such as comprehensive online instruction to productively engage youth during the week and help them maintain overall academic progress further exacerbated youth boredom, anxiety, and restlessness inside the Hickey facility.

COVID-19 Response

The young people at Hickey and at the other DJS operated detention and placement centers generally experience high levels of anxiety and this is exacerbated by periodic and

⁴ As of September 23, there have been ten staff and one youth who have tested positive for COVID-19 at Hickey.

prolonged quarantine. In the case of youth found to be positive for COVID-19, the anxiety is multiplied because they are put into medical isolation.

Given the long-standing and uncertain nature of the current health crisis, continuous close collaboration between and amongst all departments within DJS (and with MSDE JSES in regard to ensuring the appropriate delivery of education services) is necessary to help the young people incarcerated at Hickey (and at the other DJS operated detention and placement facilities) to cope with the stress that results from being locked up while also facing repeated potential exposure to a serious disease.

DJS must create and sustain programs and activities to promote psychological well-being for kids under their care in tandem with ongoing efforts to ensure the physical safety of youth and staff.

For more information on education in DJS facilities, see page 38.

Thomas J.S. Waxter Children’s Center

The Thomas J.S. Waxter Children’s Center (Waxter) in Anne Arundel County is a hardware secure (locked and fenced) detention center for girls. Waxter is operated by the Department of Juvenile Services (DJS/the Department) with a DJS-rated housing capacity of 42 beds. African American girls represented 48% of entries during the second quarter of 2020 compared to 65% in the second quarter of 2019. Hispanic/Latina youth represented 8% of youth entries during the second quarter of 2020 compared to 15% during the second quarter of 2019.

Waxter – Selected Incident Categories	Q2 2018	Q2 2019	Q2 2020
Average Daily Population (ADP)	25	22	17
1. Youth on Youth Assault/Fight	23	12	3
2. Alleged Youth on Staff Assault	4	4	6
3. Physical Restraint	65	45	18
4. Use of Handcuffs and/or Shackles	4	4	5
5. Seclusion	6	4	8
6. Contraband	0	2	2
7. Suicide Ideation	13	15	2
8. Suicide Attempt	0	0	0
9. Self-Injurious Behavior	0	0	0

The average daily population (ADP) at Waxter decreased by 23% in the second quarter of 2020 compared to the second quarter of 2019. Fights amongst youth decreased by 75% and physical restraints of youth by staff decreased by 60%. However, the number of incidents following which youth were put into seclusion doubled when comparing the same time periods and the number of incidents involving utilization of mechanical restraints (handcuffs and/or shackles) by staff inside the facility also increased (from four instances to five).

Waxter has a limited number of individual cells and dormitory-style rooms are utilized when population numbers exceed the number of available single person cells. The Department should ensure that each youth held at Waxter has their own individual cell by permanently capping the number of young people that can be held in Waxter at a level that enables DJS to separately house every young person held at the facility (i.e., tie the number of available individual cells to the population cap). The presence of the COVID-19 pandemic in combination with a situation where multiple youth have to sleep in the same room increases the potential for the spread of the virus (and of other infectious diseases and conditions).

Waxter is an aging and dilapidated facility which is in need of complete renovation. Extreme temperature fluctuations, broken showers and bathroom doors, leaking ceilings and other physical plant issues are continuing problems. Social distancing is particularly difficult in the school due to cramped classroom quarters while the space in the medical suite is inadequate to accommodate patient records, equipment and health personnel comfortably.

The availability of mental health resources increased at Waxter during the second quarter which allowed for psychoeducational groups to be held on a weekly basis and also translated into a more individualized approach to mental health services for youth at the facility. During the reporting period, the enhanced on-site mental health services proved critical to helping youth cope with high anxiety produced by incarceration and compounded by an outbreak of COVID-19 among Waxter staff which also involved a youth.

The Maryland State Department of Education, Juvenile Services Education System (MSDE JSES) is responsible for education services in DJS facilities. Due to an outbreak of COVID-19, in-person school services were stopped at Waxter for over a month during the reporting period and virtual education services were not offered in place of in-school instruction. At time of writing (August 2020), students are provided with packets to work on, however, the material is often not at grade-level, and students are required to complete the worksheets on their own (or with DJS line staff, when they can help) and in their residential units. Girls who do not work on worksheets during designated schoolwork time can suffer consequences through losing points on the compliance-based behavior management system utilized at DJS detention centers.

Leadership at MSDE JSES should collaborate with DJS to ensure the provision of appropriate virtual education services during periods when in-person school services are disrupted due to the presence (or suspected presence) of COVID-19.

For more information on education in DJS facilities, see page 38.

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 boys and girls, with a DJS-rated capacity of 57 youths. African American youth represented 50% of entries in the second quarter of 2020 compared to 73% during the same period in 2019. Hispanic/Latinx youth accounted for 35% of entries during the second quarter of 2020 versus 22% during the same period in 2019.

Noyes – Selected Incident Categories	Q2 2018	Q2 2019	Q2 2020
Average Daily Population (ADP)	36	31	16
1. Youth on Youth Assault/Fight	16	16	6
2. Alleged Youth on Staff Assault	1	3	1
3. Physical Restraint	37	55	33
4. Use of Handcuffs and/or Shackles	3	10	21
5. Seclusion	3	1	3
6. Contraband	2	3	3
7. Suicide Ideation	7	3	4
8. Suicide Attempt	0	0	0
9. Self-Injurious Behavior	0	1	13

Average daily population decreased by 48% during the second quarter of 2020 compared to the same time last year. The number of incidents involving fighting among youth decreased by 63% and physical restraints of youth by staff decreased by 40%. However, the frequency of instances where mechanical restraints (handcuffs and/or leg irons) were used on youth by staff within the facility more than doubled and there was a large number of incidents involving youth

engaging in self-injurious behavior. Seclusion was used three times during the current reporting period.

Girls with high mental health needs accounted for 10 of the 13 incidents of self-injurious behavior at Noyes. In addition, an autistic boy with a need for specialized services was housed at Noyes during the second quarter of 2020. Detention is an inappropriate setting for youth with significant mental health challenges and often worsens mental health conditions.⁵

The Maryland State Department of Education, Juvenile Services Education System (MSDE JSES) is responsible for education services in DJS facilities. Montgomery County Public Schools (MCPS) provided additional resources for the school at Noyes under a previous agreement with JSES. However, at time of writing, plans to renew the arrangement for the 2020-2021 school year have not been finalized by MSDE administrators. Leadership at MSDE and MSDE JSES should continue working collaboratively with MCPS to ensure that supports and services provided through MCPS to the school at Noyes can continue.

For more information on education in DJS facilities, see page 38.

⁵ A Roadmap to the Ideal Juvenile Justice System (July 2019), by Tim Decker (on behalf of the Juvenile Justice Leadership Network), p. 13, available at: <https://cjjr.georgetown.edu/wp-content/uploads/2019/07/A-Roadmap-to-the-Ideal-Juvenile-Justice-System-Digital-Release.pdf> ; Justice Policy Institute, The Dangers of Detention: The Impact of Incarcerating Youth in Detention and Other Secure Facilities, (2011), p. 8., available at: http://www.justicepolicy.org/images/upload/06-11_rep_dangersofdetention_jj.pdf

Lower Eastern Shore Children’s Center

The Lower Eastern Shore Children’s Center (LESCC) is a hardware secure (locked and fenced) 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 18 boys and six girls. African American youth represented 81% of entries during the second quarter of 2020 compared to 72% in the second quarter of 2019.

LESCC – Selected Incident Categories	Q2 2018	Q2 2019	Q2 2020
Average Daily Population (ADP)	20	18	8
1. Youth on Youth Assault/Fight	12	6	6
2. Alleged Youth on Staff Assault	0	0	0
3. Physical Restraint	29	14	14
4. Use of Handcuffs and/or Shackles	1	1	0
5. Seclusion	0	0	0
6. Contraband	1	0	1
7. Suicide Ideation	1	4	5
8. Suicide Attempt	0	0	0
9. Self-Injurious Behavior	1	2	0

The average daily population at LESCC decreased by approximately 55% in the second quarter of 2020 when compared to the second quarter of 2019 while youth on youth fights (although infrequent at LESCC) remained at the same level, as did the utilization of physical restraints of youth by staff. Neither seclusion nor mechanical restraints (handcuffs and/or leg irons) were used inside the facility during the second quarter of 2020.

Girls held at the Carter facility, a hardware secure placement site for girls, were moved to a unit at LESCC during the quarter and remained there until mid-June.

Staff at LESCC continued to use the child-centered team approach developed over time at the facility when caring for the young people incarcerated there during the continuing COVID-19 pandemic. Personalized music devices (MP3 players), e-book readers (Nooks), hand held gaming devices, and sports equipment such as basketballs (which are sanitized after use) have been utilized for solo play during recreation periods to keep kids constructively engaged.

The Department completed safety modifications to the bathrooms in youth cells at LESCC. Break-resistant stainless steel sinks and toilets and anti-ligature fixtures have been installed.

The Maryland State Department of Education, Juvenile Services Education System (MSDE JSES) is responsible for education services in DJS facilities.

For information on education in DJS facilities, see page 38.

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 which is owned and operated by the Maryland Department of Juvenile Services (DJS/the Department). African American youth represented 42% of total entries during the second quarter of 2020 compared to 56% in the second quarter of 2019. Latino/Hispanic youth accounted for 8% of total entries during the current reporting period, a decrease of 1% compared to the second quarter of 2019.

WMCC – Selected Incident Categories	Q2 2018	Q2 2019	Q2 2020
Average Daily Population (ADP)	20	18	16
1. Youth on Youth Assault/Fight	8	16	9
2. Alleged Youth on Staff Assault	1	1	0
3. Physical Restraint	17	31	13
4. Use of Handcuffs and/or Shackles	4	8	0
5. Seclusion	1	2	0
6. Contraband	0	3	3
7. Suicide Ideation	5	0	1
8. Suicide Attempt	0	0	0
9. Self-Injurious Behavior	0	0	0

The average daily population decreased by 11% in the second quarter of 2020 compared to the same time last year. The number of incidents involving youth fights decreased by 44% and physical restraints of youth by staff decreased by 58%. Mechanical restraints (handcuffs and/or leg irons) were not used on youth inside the facility and there were no seclusions during the second quarter of 2020.

A newly hired recreational director should be tasked with developing creative and engaging programming for youth. During monitoring visits and also in filed grievances, youth reported concerns about current restrictions due to COVID-19 including: not receiving haircuts or barbering services for over four months (Grievance 16528, 16529); a lack of activities as well as a prohibition on using basketballs (even if each ball is sanitized and confined to one individual) during recreation; a ban on card playing (a popular pastime on living units when there is nothing else to do); and a failure to supply individual music players which are available to the young people incarcerated at other DJS facilities – the music players also help mitigate downtime and help youth to cope with anxiety (Grievance 16528). Youth at WMCC have also requested more phone calls home (Grievance 16525).

Youth with extended lengths of stay in detention who maintain positive behavior should be eligible for an increased variety of incentives regardless of disposition status. A 14 year-old boy who had been housed at WMCC for over 8 months (during the current reporting period), and had maintained positive behavior throughout his stay, requested promotion through the Department's behavior management program so that he could have an opportunity to earn more phone calls home. Extra phone calls are one of the incentives available to youth who progress past the basic level of the behavior management program. Although otherwise eligible, the boy was denied promotion due to Department-set rules that do not allow youth on pre-disposition status to progress through the levels of the behavior management program regardless of how long they are incarcerated while waiting for court decisions or whether or not the young person has been noted as compliant with all rules governing behavior inside a DJS facility. Incentives for young people in this situation (stuck at the basic level of the behavior program) are limited to the possibility of earning name brand hygiene products.

The Maryland State Department of Education, Juvenile Services Education System (MSDE JSES) is responsible for education services in DJS facilities.

During the second quarter, there were a number of high school graduates housed at WMCC. Further education was unavailable to the graduates and they reported experiencing extreme boredom (Grievance 16528). Options for high school graduates at all DJS-operated facilities should be substantially expanded.

For more information on education in DJS facilities, see page 38.

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 Vision Quest, Inc., and licensed by the Department of Juvenile Services to house up to 24 boys. The treatment program at Morning Star is based on the trauma-informed Sanctuary⁶ model.

In-person education-related programming continued throughout the second quarter of 2020 while therapeutic services were provided both onsite and virtually through an outside vendor. While the gym is in a state of disrepair and remains unusable, an on-site swimming pool and air-conditioned weight room were available for recreation purposes. Some of the young people at Morning Star said they enjoyed taking care of the horses, chickens, and ducks which live on campus and several youth participated in equine-assisted activities. Youth also took short walks and bike rides in the surrounding area and were able to go horseback riding. Outdoor-based visitation was available for parents and loved ones of the youth at Morning Star and on-campus barbering services recently resumed after a hiatus due to precautions taken against the possible spread of COVID-19.

One Love Group Home

One Love Group Home (One Love) is a privately-run 8-bed group home in Baltimore City operated by Building Communities Today for Tomorrow, Inc. The home is licensed by and receives referrals from the Maryland Department of Juvenile Services and accepts young people between the ages of 17 and 20.

One Love continues to provide comprehensive services to youth in a nurturing, home-like environment. Appropriate modifications to programming have been implemented to reduce the risk of transmission of COVID-19 to youth and staff. Everyone at the facility wears a mask when interacting and temperature checks are conducted multiple times per day. Family visitation continues to be encouraged, however during in-person visitation, parents meet with youth outside while maintaining social distance and wearing masks. Youth have cell phones to keep in regular contact with loved ones. Group and individual counseling is provided virtually through an outside vendor. Outdoor activities such as fishing trips and neighborhood walks are facilitated by staff to keep youth engaged. Youth with community jobs continued their employment duties throughout the second quarter of 2020.

One Love serves as a community-based model of care for justice-involved youth.

⁶ For more information on the Sanctuary model, see: <http://www.sanctuaryweb.com/>

MARYLAND STATE DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION IN DJS FACILITIES

The Maryland State Department of Education in DJS Facilities

The Maryland State Department of Education, through its Juvenile Services Education System (MSDE JSES) division is responsible for education services in DJS facilities.

Education personnel were not on-site at DJS facilities for the bulk of the second quarter of 2020 due to concerns about COVID-19. Education programming initially solely involved students completing packets of worksheets on their own for six hours a day and five days a week. DJS staff were made responsible for distributing and picking up worksheets, scheduling times for students to complete worksheets, and supervising students while they completed the worksheets. Some DJS staff attempted to help students who had trouble understanding questions and filling out the worksheets on their own. In cases when packet work was completed by students before the allotted school period was over, DJS was responsible for providing supplemental programming. The packets were delivered by MSDE starting in April but were left ungraded for months.

In mid-April, MSDE JSES began implementing on-line classes capped at a couple of hours per week for students in detention and placement. While the couple of hours of online class time supplied by MSDE was welcomed, there were several issues with the delivery of the modicum of virtual education as supplied, including:

*No MSDE JSES staff were on-site to ensure smooth delivery and offer assistance to youth or technical help to DJS staffers during the virtual learning sessions. The onus of setting up and running the online platform and structuring and supervising the school day was put squarely on the shoulders of DJS administrators and line staff. DJS staffers were even made responsible for running the chat feature to type student questions or comments during lessons.

*Students were in virtual classes an average of one to two times per week (for a total of approximately two hours). During the remainder of the school week, students continued to be relegated to completing worksheets and with no feedback or grading of their work by MSDE employees.

*Students from several facilities attended the same class based on grade level assignments. The online classes were taught by teachers the majority of students did not know and therefore had not formed a trust relationship with instructors that could have translated into individualized help with education-related issues.

*Teachers offering online instruction could not see or hear students to gauge if the students understood or were having difficulties with the class material or problems trying to follow the lessons. Additionally, students could not posit questions directly to the online teacher as all communication between teacher and student had to pass through a DJS designee who was authorized to utilize the chat room feature within the software platform. During the reporting period, many students reported having trouble following lessons and commented that they would gradually “tune out” during the online class periods. Students with learning-related difficulties

such as ADHD had a particularly difficult time with virtual learning as it was implemented by MSDE JSES.

At time of writing (mid-August), in-person education services have resumed for a summer school session that began at the end of June/beginning of July, 2020. Classes were shortened (from the overly long 90-minute pre-COVID-19 class periods) to 45-minute class sessions. In addition to attending elective courses, students eligible for credit recovery were allowed access to the APEX software to re-take classes during the summer. However, because of periodic outbreaks of the coronavirus, in-person instruction is being stopped (at least temporarily) at some facilities.

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) notes that “extended school closure is harmful to children. It can lead to severe learning loss, and the need for in-person instruction is particularly important for students with heightened behavioral needs.”⁷ In addition, “remote learning makes absorbing information more difficult for students with disabilities, developmental delays, or other cognitive disabilities.”⁸

MSDE JSES leadership should prioritize the continuous operation of school services and should commit to ensuring in-person instruction whenever possible during the fall and spring school semesters.

However, further elongated disruptions to in-person education programming may prove inevitable due to the recurring presence of infection at detention and placement facilities. MSDE JSES must properly and comprehensively plan for scenarios where in-person classes are suspended due to staff or education personnel testing positive for COVID-19 – such a situation has already occurred at several schools within DJS institutions (including the Hickey, Waxter, and BCJJC secure detention centers and Victor Cullen hardware secure placement center).

The negative ramifications stemming from the absence of on-site school services should be mitigated by MSDE JSES through the following measures:

- Close collaboration with DJS to develop and implement a contingency plan for when in-person instruction is disrupted.
- Assignment of at least one designated on-site MSDE JSES administrator who is able to supervise and help coordinate education services at all times.
- The use of technology such as Chromebooks to ensure that daily virtual instruction is provided and delivered by the teachers that are normally located at each facility. Even under emergent circumstances, MSDE JSES and DJS must collaborate to implement a class schedule that follows the normal school day to the extent possible when virtual classes are being delivered.

⁷ Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, The Importance of Reopening Schools this Fall, available at: <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/community/schools-childcare/reopening-schools.html>

⁸ Ibid.

- Utilization of an online platform that allows teachers and students to see and hear each other and which also allows for virtual interaction between students and teachers in real time.
- Access to an individual computer or tablet for each student in order to facilitate on-line instruction and to assist in the completion of individual course work.

Teachers, guidance counselors, principals, and other education personnel serve a vital role in fostering child and adolescent development. As the CDC notes, “aside from a child’s home, no other setting has more influence on a child’s health and well-being than their school.”⁹

⁹ Ibid.

MARYLAND DEPARTMENT OF JUVENILE SERVICES – RESPONSE



DJS RESPONSE TO THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC

For a detailed description of the response by the Department of Juvenile Services (DJS) to the COVID-19 pandemic crisis and its efforts to protect the safety and well-being of youth, staff and the community at-large, please see the “DJS COVID19 Response” document found on the DJS website at https://djs.maryland.gov/Documents/COVID-19/DJS-Overview-COVID-19_08.21.2020.pdf.

For additional information, please see the COVID-19 Response page on the DJS website, <https://djs.maryland.gov/Pages/COVID-19.aspx> or call the agency’s COVID-19 24-hour hotline at 877-357-4161.

DJS appreciates JJMU’s acknowledgement of DJS’s efforts to protect youth and staff during this pandemic. In March 2020, the Department began making significant changes to facility procedures in anticipation of the arrival of the Coronavirus to Maryland. Steps such as implementing social distancing and universal masking, increased hygiene and sanitation, limiting facility entry to staff and approved vendors, creating intake admission units in juvenile detention facilities, and creating medical isolation units for youth who test positive for Coronavirus have played a role in minimizing the impact of the pandemic on DJS facilities.

Additionally, DJS has implemented a pre-entry screening procedure consisting of a questionnaire and a temperature check. Every staff person or vendor seeking to enter a DJS facility must complete and sign a symptom questionnaire and submit to a temperature scan before entering. Any staff or vendor who indicates possible COVID-19 symptoms on the questionnaire and/or has a temperature over 100 degrees Fahrenheit is denied entry. Additionally, DJS’s medical director and other medical staff are available in the event that any questions or concerns arise about admitting staff or vendors to DJS facilities. Through this rigorous process, DJS seeks to ensure that staff who are potentially sick are identified before possible exposure of youth or staff inside the facility.

In May 2020, Governor Hogan directed DJS to begin universal COVID-19 testing on all youth and staff in DJS facilities. Since COVID-19 testing began, more than 4,000 tests have been administered to youth

and staff in DJS facilities. To date, 16 youth in DJS custody have tested positive for Coronavirus, with all having fully recovered. Seventy-five DJS staff have tested positive with 68 having currently recovered from the virus. Testing will continue at all DJS facilities on a monthly basis or more frequently, if deemed necessary by the DJS medical director or health Department.

The use of medical isolation for individuals testing positive for COVID-19 (or any other highly contagious virus) is a medical best practice and similar to what occurs in the community, whether in the home or in a hospital or other setting. Under normal circumstances, DJS policy restricts the use of “time out” periods for a youth to be away from the larger population in his/her room as a means of “cooling off.” DJS recognizes that being in a room isolated from others is difficult for anyone. To alleviate the stress of the handful of youth that have tested positive for COVID-19 and required to be medically isolated, DJS has provided handheld games and cell phones for youth to call family while they recover. 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 medical director and team of physician and nurse practitioner staff. Given the highly infectious nature of COVID-19, our healthcare staff agreed that medical isolation is necessary to protect youth and staff in DJS facilities.

As part of its infection mitigation measures, DJS provides Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) to all staff and youth in DJS facilities. DJS continues to procure PPE in sufficient quantities to ensure that all youth and staff in DJS facilities can be properly masked at all times.

As mentioned above, DJS has restricted access to its facilities to just staff and approved vendors (i.e. food delivery, repair and service professionals, etc.). Consequently, multiple outside organizations who provided programming to youth are no longer permitted to enter DJS facilities in order to reduce the potential exposure of DJS youth and staff to COVID-19. To address these gaps, DJS administrators have supplied all DJS facilities with activities and games for youth including, but not limited to, MP3 players and handheld games. DJS will continue to closely follow the State re-opening plan as set forth by Governor Larry Hogan to determine an appropriate time to permit organizations to access DJS facilities and provide safe, socially distanced programming to youth.

Youth in DJS facilities benefit from regular interactions with their families. For that reason, DJS has increased the opportunities for youth to communicate with family members through phone calls and video calls, when appropriate. During the second quarter of 2020, family visitation was temporarily suspended at all DJS facilities due to outbreaks of COVID-19 in various communities in Maryland as well as some DJS facilities. With COVID-19 infection rates declining in the community, DJS plans to re-initiate family visitation in DJS facilities in late September 2020.

DJS recognizes that the “new normal” in its facilities has required an adjustment on the part of staff and youth. From wearing masks to restrictions placed on activities and the use of quarantine and isolation when medically required, DJS acknowledges that these changes could produce anxiety among staff and youth. However, in these challenging times, the agency has witnessed facility staff rising to the occasion

and youth demonstrating incredible resiliency and adaptability. DJS remains committed to keep facility staff and youth as safe as possible during this pandemic and to continue to find creative solutions to address programming challenges in the facility.

**DEPARTMENT OF JUVENILE SERVICES
RESPONSE TO JJMU 2020 SECOND QUARTER REPORT**

The Department of Juvenile Services (DJS) has reviewed the Juvenile Justice Monitoring Unit's (JJMU) 2020 Second Quarter Report, and provides the following response:

THE JJMU SHOULD ADOPT STANDARDIZED AND OBJECTIVE AUDIT TOOLS.

The Department continues to urge the JJMU to adopt nationally-recognized standards and audit tools to ensure objective and credible evaluations of Department facilities. JJMU staff should also be certified to audit all state and federal regulatory requirements (Md. Code Ann., State Government §6-404). By doing so, the Department would be provided clear, factual, measurable, and objective recommendations. Using objective standards would assist the JJMU in reducing any biased or subjective recommendations and provide a consistent framework for its evaluations.

COMPARING CURRENT FACILITY INCIDENT DATA TO PREVIOUS YEARS IS OF LIMITED UTILITY.

DJS continues to encourage the JJMU to compare data to previous quarters within the same year rather than their current approach referencing data from 1 to 3 years prior. Examining a previous quarter or an average of 2 or 3 immediate previous quarters would allow for a more accurate comparison and be far more useful in determining facility trends.

THE JUVENILE JUSTICE REFORM COUNCIL WILL ACCELERATE DJS'S REFORM EFFORTS WITH THE SUPPORT OF CRITICAL STAKEHOLDERS.

During the 2019 session of the Maryland General Assembly, the legislature passed and Governor Hogan signed Senate Bill 856 / House Bill 606 into law, which established the Juvenile Justice Reform Council (JJRC). The JJRC is comprised of a diverse group of juvenile justice stakeholders and experts. Members include legislators, experts on juvenile law and policy, and representatives of law enforcement, the judiciary, advocacy organizations, child serving agencies, and formerly system-involved youth.

The legislature charged JJRC with:

- using a data-driven approach to develop a statewide framework of policies to invest in strategies to increase public safety and reduce recidivism of youth offenders;
- researching best practices for the treatment of juveniles who are subject to the criminal and juvenile justice systems; and
- identifying and making recommendations to limit or otherwise mitigate risk factors that contribute to juvenile contact with the criminal and juvenile justice systems.

A technical assistance provider will assist the JJRC in conducting a rigorous review of the system, including the treatment modalities used by DJS in its committed programs.

The JJRC has agreed to pursue 7 priorities, which are: (1) Juvenile Probation; (2) Minimum Age of Juvenile Jurisdiction; (3) Out of Home Placement/Commitment and Detention Use; (4) Youth Charged as Adults; (5) Diversion; (6) Services; and (7) Education.

DJS is pleased to report that JJRC meetings have resumed. After a brief suspension, the JJRC has had two meetings (August 6, 2020 and September 3, 2020). DJS looks forward to working with all of the stakeholders involved in the JJRC to continue to push agency reforms forward. To view recorded video of the JJRC meetings on YouTube, go to <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=VAclR-LkamY> and <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=4o0knbKKGXY>.

Committed Placement Centers

Victor Cullen Center (VCC)

DJS appreciates the positive comments by the JJMU regarding the more stabilized culture at the Victor Cullen Center due to lower staff/youth ratios. DJS also appreciates the positive comments centered on improved mental health treatment resources.

The VCC utilizes Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports (PBIS), which is a comprehensive and evidence-based framework that organizes services to support youth. Trauma Informed Care and evidence-based interventions are key components of DJS's model. All staff are trained in Trauma Informed Care, which helps them understand how trauma impacts youth and their behavior and provides them with strategies for working more effectively with youth. Trauma Informed Care is supported by trauma specific individual and group interventions. All youth participate in TAMAR-Y (Trauma Addictions Mental Health and Recovery - Youth) trauma groups. TAMAR-Y includes psychoeducation as well as mindfulness techniques that help youth better manage trauma symptoms.

Youth also participate in START (Social Skills Training and Aggression Replacement Techniques) groups, which are based on ART (Aggression Replacement Training), an evidence-based aggression management group.

DJS continually strives to offer activities and programming that interests the youth. The VCC programming committee planned and implemented several activities to keep youth engaged such as tie-dying shirts, frisbee golf, pickleball, handball, and soccer. Additionally, the wood shop program is operated by five trained staff and holds sessions with youth on a weekly basis.

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

When youth at the Garrett Children's Center were re-located to VCC, facility staff, including behavioral health staff also re-located to VCC to provide continuity of care. Additional support was provided by VCC behavioral health staff.

Youth Centers

DJS appreciates the positive comments by the JJMU regarding the more individualized attention and intensive mental health supports for young people at the youth centers thanks to the population reductions.

Effective August 27, 2020, Backbone Youth Center reinstated off-grounds trips for youth. These outings include hiking, fishing, canoeing, swimming, camping, and the Reflections Program. For all such outings, infection control measures such as use of PPE masks and appropriate social distancing are required for the safety of all youth and staff.

While some activities have been curtailed in order to reduce the chances of exposure and spread of COVID-19 virus, youth are encouraged to play individualized games or participate in activities that do not require participants to frequently exchange items.

Green Ridge Youth Center staff have organized outdoor activities such going on nature walks and fishing. In addition to these outdoor activities, Green Ridge offers other activities such as puzzles, arts, crafts, and bingo. Amazon Fire tablets with music, games, books, and magazines for use during free time and Nook tablets with over 75 books, and individual handheld games are also provided..

To improve the cultural competency of facility staff, race equity training is provided to DJS staff. Behavioral health staff process current events from news and media from outside of the facilities. These topics include the Black Lives Matter movement, protests, and historical and current events.

The JJMU report mentions that the youth at the youth centers asked to be informed about recent protests around the country and stated that they want to engage in structured dialogue about these issues. As news of events in certain areas is learned from family and friends, youth bring these topics up

in their daily activities and are encouraged to do so. This includes individual and group therapy sessions, as well as in casual conversations among their peers and staff. The behavioral health staff at several facilities have engaged youth in structured group dialogues about race and racism. This has included creating posters on the topics as well as viewing and processing movies and other media as a means of facilitating the discussion. Additionally, topical conversations on the COVID-19 pandemic are held. Any updates, continued education on the use of PPE, trends of the pandemic, and what to expect when they complete the program are just a few of the topics explored and discussed in group therapy sessions.

DJS is committed to provide youth a voice regarding recent events and the national conversation on race. However, DJS must also balance safety and security of the staff and youth in the operation of its facilities. Regarding Grievance 16495, the posters were removed from the dorm because the messaging of the posters escalated the behavior of some youth towards other youth and staff. Staff then addressed the behavior and set clear expectations of what was appropriate. Facility Administration met with each youth individually and explained to each youth that they support their voice on the Black Lives Matter movement, but their actions need to be positive in nature and appropriate for the facility environment. Facility administration and the youth involved agreed that their art could be displayed in either the administration building or in the dormitory outside the staff office where all youth art is displayed. Since this time, several staff members have planned and coordinated structured activities around BLM to include poster making and poems. The posters and poems completed were displayed in the dormitory outside the staff office, as discussed.

Mountain View (formerly the J. DeWeese Carter Center)

Youth at Mountain View participate in individual and family counseling, aggression management groups, trauma psychoeducation groups, substance abuse process, and psychoeducation groups. Mountain View's behavioral management system also includes expectations and activities for youth that are treatment focused. Progression through the program is only partly contingent upon points/level attainment. Progress on individualized treatment goals are evaluated weekly and modified monthly.

Regarding Incident 164362, DJS management investigation indicated that, while there was no physical contact, the staff failed to respond appropriately and used inappropriate language toward the youth. Corrective measures were taken in accordance with the DJS Standards of Conduct.

Individual MP3 players are an incentive offered through the behavior management program at Mountain View. Facility administrators are reviewing how the individual MP3 players can be implemented into the current facility programming schedule. Calming activities such as meditation and quiet times have been incorporated into the youths' schedule along with crocheting, knitting, puzzles, art and reading.

Regarding Incident 164697, a formal investigation was completed. Corrective action was taken and facility operating procedures were revised.

Detention Centers

Baltimore City Juvenile Justice Center (BCJJC)

BCJJC has a leadership team consisting of administrators each having over 15 years of experience with the agency and over 20 years working with at-risk youth. All members have held supervisory or management positions throughout their career.

Disposable and cloth masks are issued to youth at BCJJC. Disposable masks are replaced daily or upon request. Youth assigned to general population units are issued two cloth masks every morning prior to coming out of their rooms and at the end of the day once youth are in rooms for bedtime.

The cleaning supply inventory is monitored and replenished on a weekly basis. BCJJC, along with every DJS facility, is cleaned once a day for 5 days a week by an outside vendor. In the event of an outbreak, a disinfectant cleaning is performed. DJS staff are responsible for wiping down and cleaning high-traffic areas when needed, and youth are responsible for cleaning their own room daily with cleaning supplies provided by direct care staff.

To comply with social distancing requirements, youth groups have been reduced to six or less youth on an assigned unit. The facility uses assigned seating on the living unit, cafeteria, and in education to maintain consistency with this practice. The BCJJC administrative team continues to review and develop ways to promote social distancing and maintain proper supervision with staffing. Additional signage has been posted throughout the facility.

BCJJC administrators conduct unannounced rounds to monitor and enforce social distancing, masking, and cleaning requirements. Additionally, the DJS Office of the Inspector General conducts video reviews to ensure that youth and staff are complying with social distancing, masking and cleaning vendors are conducting the necessary cleaning services. The OIG sends a report to facility leadership to provide feedback on compliance with infection control measures.

During the quarter, youth at BCJJC were able to engage in activities such as board games, reading Nooks, bingo, individual sports tournaments (that were in compliance with infection control measures), arts and crafts, virtual religious services, and virtual life skills programming. Youth also enjoyed video game tournaments and special meal incentives provided by dietary staff.

The Administration at BCJJC continues to make every effort to keep youth and staff safe and informed during this pandemic. In addition to the regular channels of communication, youth also have the advisory board and youth grievance process to share concerns. Youth may also discuss concerns with behavioral health staff during daily individual or group settings.

Behavioral health staff at BCJJC has continued to provide regular services to youth. Youth on quarantine and isolation are seen daily. Youth on other units are seen based on individual need. Behavioral health has provided additional tools to youth to aid with coping skills, boredom, and stress reduction including: wireless radio headphones for youth on quarantine units, special activity packets that include activities such as word searches, coloring pages, puzzles, and minute mystery games, contact with family members for additional support, and providing journals and stress balls.

Collaboration between facility administration, behavioral health, direct care staff, and case management occurs weekly and daily through meetings on the units. Youth have weekly multidisciplinary treatment team meetings. During these meetings, youth's strengths and needs are discussed along with their individual progress in the facility. Coping plans have been developed for youth to aid in self-regulation to deal with various emotions such as boredom and anxiety.

Youth admitted to the Intensive Services Unit during the quarter met the admission criteria and returned to the general population after meeting treatment goals set forth by behavioral health staff.

Cheltenham (CYDC)

DJS administration at CYDC has reaffirmed the importance of maintaining a structured environment with facility staff. Staff briefings, supervisory rounds, and meetings were conducted to provide support to staff and reinforce the importance of utilizing resources such as behavioral health, coworkers, and supervision to address youth behaviors. Behavioral health provides regular services to youth to include individual and group sessions. Youth on quarantine and isolation are seen daily. Youth on other units are seen based on individual need.

To keep youth active and engaged, CYDC administration has implemented virtual programming with outside vendors. Behavioral health has provided additional tools to youth to aid with coping skills, boredom, and stress reduction including: special activity packets with fun activities such as word searches, coloring pages, puzzles, and minute mystery games; contact with family members for additional support; and items such as journals and stress balls. Additionally, clinicians prepared creative projects in conjunction with case managers and other staff to include specialty groups with art projects, mindfulness, yoga, and use of therapeutic games. Facility staff are encouraged to develop internal programming and are supported in their efforts via supplies, access to programming areas, time and staffing.

Charles H. Hickey, Jr. School (Hickey)

The behavioral health director at Hickey is onsite over 40 hours per week. The Director provides additional oversight at BCJJC and CYDC on a periodic basis. However, during the COVID-19 pandemic, the director has been primarily located at CYDC in order to reduce travel between facilities.

To address youth anxiety and stress during the pandemic, youth on quarantine and isolation are seen daily. Youth on other units are seen based on individual need. See the Intro Section of this Response for more detailed information on DJS's COVID-19 Response.

Programming at Hickey is a collaborative effort between staff and youth. Hickey youth meet monthly with administration to discuss planned activities, provide feedback on previous activities, suggestions for future activities, or have open dialogue with the administration. In addition, there is a mental health therapist assigned to each housing unit that completes individual sessions, monitoring youth psychological well-being as well as facilitating daily groups with the youth on various topics. Hickey administrators have provided various activity books and games to reduce downtime. Recreation staff coordinated athletic activities such as badminton, bean bag toss, and other callisthenic exercises conducted in a safe, socially distanced manner.

[Thomas J.S. Waxter Children's Center \(Waxter\)](#)

DJS appreciates the positive comments by the JJMU regarding the more individualized approach to behavioral health in supporting youth with increased anxiety during the COVID-19 pandemic.

Due to the decreased population at Waxter, use of the dormitory-style room was not necessary during the reporting period. Each youth was provided their own separate room.

Waxter has a Facility Preventive Maintenance Plan that includes daily, weekly and monthly inspections to address all physical plant and cleanliness concerns. The repair for the shower doors has been approved and work will be scheduled for completion when COVID-19 restrictions are lifted. The heating and cooling systems have been replaced. Waxter has also increased the contractual cleaning services to ensure a clean and safe environment is provided for the youth and staff.

The decreased population and modified education schedule have also allowed for proper social distancing in the classrooms at Waxter.

[Alfred D. Children's Center Noyes \(Noyes\)](#)

Regarding the autistic youth placed at Noyes, behavioral health staff provided daily contact with the youth and worked to identify coping strategies. The facility team and community staff collaborated and made multiple attempts to find an alternative placement option that was more suitable. The youth was eventually placed at an in-patient psychiatric hospital.

[Lower Eastern Shore Children's Center \(LESCC\)](#)

DJS appreciates the positive comments made by the JJMU in regards to the facility efforts to keep youth constructively engaged and the staff's continued efforts to be child-centered.

Western Maryland Children's Center (WMCC)

Barbering services for youth at WMCC resumed on August 16, 2020 and were provided in a manner consistent with appropriate infection control measures.

DJS administration is looking into the purchase of MP3 players and establishing a plan within the behavior management system to offer the additional incentive to youth.

As of July 29, 2020, youth have been permitted to make phone calls to family members on a daily basis. Youth also have opportunities to have video calls with their families provided that the families have the capability to receive calls in that manner.

Regarding the 14-year-old youth who had advanced through the behavior management system, the facility treatment team met and discussed the youth's progress. The team determined that this youth had done well throughout his stay and an override was implemented to promote the youth to Level I in July 2020. The youth thereafter progressed to earn Level II status.

Private Programs

Silver Oak Academy (SOA)

Pages 15 through 16

Page 15

1. “Three youth escaped from the facility during the second quarter by running out of their housing unit toward the facility parking lot, where a car with an unidentified driver was waiting for them. The incident occurred around 4:30 AM while the staff to youth ratio was three staffers for the 29 youth on campus”.

SOA Response: Prior to the AWOLs, SOA had released a student to his home after he tested COVID positive. It is suspected that he returned at a planned time, knowing where to position his vehicle to avoid detection and waited for the three students as they ran from the residential unit, jumped in the car and left.

DJS Response: The Licensing and Monitoring Unit (L&M) conducted follow up immediately after the incident occurred on May 15, 2020.

SOA reported that the breakdown was due to failure to monitor the cameras at night. No staff was held accountable because staff on duty were completing their assignments as scheduled but there was just not a staff assigned or a procedure put in place to monitor the cameras. The staff to student coverage ratio was met on that night as there were four staff and thirty-two students.

Due to the failure to monitor the cameras to prevent the AWOL from happening, L&M requested a Corrective Action Plan (CAP). SOA submitted the following CAP and it was reviewed and approved by L&M:

“Silver Oak Academy has moved students from Harvard Hall to Georgetown Hall. By moving the students to one unit, this will ensure that staff are in ratio while on campus. Georgetown Hall will be equipped with a large monitor in the upstairs office to be viewed by the Shift Supervisor and then the Night Coach Counselor on duty. Camera reviews will occur at 10-20 minute intervals and will be documented in the nightly log. The nightly logs will be reviewed by the management team once a month to ensure compliance.

During transitions during the day on campus, the staff member in control will support movement by monitoring the cameras. This will bring awareness to campus transitions and movements. This

will also increase attention on monitoring the cameras to enhance proactive intervention/incident reduction”.

The Licensing and Monitoring Unit (L&M) will continue to monitor to ensure compliance.

Page 16

2. “An outbreak of COVID-19 occurred at the facility during the second quarter of 2020. Despite the disruption in the programming due to the outbreak, a number of youth were able to continue with classwork and obtain their high school diploma through the school at Silver Oak. A virtual graduation ceremony was organized by the school staff to commemorate the occasion. The Carroll County Health Department implemented universal testing for presence of COVID-19 at Silver Oak following positive test results of symptomatic youth who had not been quarantined. All youth placed at the facility and over a third of staff tested positive. Several youth were released and sent home to quarantine. The Department of Juvenile Services sent youth who were not released by the Courts from staff secure Silver Oak Academy to Victor Cullen, a maximum security (locker and fenced) facility, to complete their stay in placement.

As of August of 2020, there were no young people placed through DJS at Silver Oak Academy”.

SOA Response: While Silver Oak initiated a number of ROP initiatives and Carroll County Health Department directives, the attempt to balance school and programming with COVID-19 precautions was unsuccessful. SOA has integrated the COVID-19 precautionary information gained through the “outbreak” with updated CDC, Carroll County Health Department and DJS recommendations to continue to provide impactful residential/educational programming to Pennsylvania and Washington D.C. placed students, who were not removed from SOA as well as to three newly placed youth. Through the COVID disruption, SOA was able to work with on-site students and to provide education services to discharged DJS students resulting in 15 High School diplomas.

DJS Response: The DJS Licensing and Monitoring Unit (L&M) worked closely with SOA providing technical assistance to help ensure proper steps were put into place during the outbreak. SOA provided L&M with quarantine procedures set in place with guidance from Carroll County Health Department to ensure the recovery of all youth who tested positive as well as staff. On June 6, 2020, L&M requested SOA to complete an Intake/New Admissions and Visitation Policies to address the concerns of decreasing the risk of another outbreak at SOA. During this time, SOA was required to stop all new admission/ intake and visitations. SOA continued to work with Carroll County Health Department as well as L&M to provide L&M with Intake/ Admission and Visitation Policies. On August 11, 2020, the Department’s Medical Director approved SOA

policies and SOA was approved to resume admissions. L&M continues to work with SOA to ensure another outbreak does not occur.

VisionQuest Morning Star (VQMS)

Page 37

1. “While the gym is in a state of disrepair and remains unusable, an on-site swimming pool and air-conditional weight room were available for recreation purposes.”

VQMS Response: The situation surrounding the gym remains a topic of discussion with the property owner and the corporate management. Discussions include various options, downsizing the existing gymnasium, complete removal or rebuilding the existing structure. The corporation is in the process of obtaining quotes for these options. In addition to the above-mentioned recreation, the program also offers horseback riding, non-contact basketball along with arts and crafts.

DJS Response: L&M will continue to monitor to ensure that 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.

**MARYLAND STATE
DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
- RESPONSE**



Karen B. Salmon, Ph.D.
State Superintendent of Schools

September 15, 2020

MSDE Response to the Juvenile Justice Monitoring Unit's Second Quarter Report

The Maryland State Department of Education (MSDE) has reviewed the Juvenile Justice Monitoring Unit's (JJMU) 2020 second quarter report in relation to the provision of educational services within the Department of Juvenile Services' (DJS) residential facilities.

Maryland State Department of Education in DJS Facilities

Juvenile Services Education System (JSES) Timeline of Response to the Public Health Crisis- COVID-19

In the JJMU report, there are multiple references (pp. 26, 29, 31, and 39) regarding education personnel not being on site at the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic and that students were completing packets on their own for six hours a day, five days a week. This statement is misleading. The JSES school staff began providing both instructional materials and virtual instruction on April 6, 2020, which occurred prior to the writing of the JJMU 2nd quarter report. In April, the MSDE JSES staff began researching other juvenile facilities of similar size to Maryland in other states, as well as, several Maryland local school systems. Maryland State Department of Education staff research verified that most facilities and school systems reduced educational services, moved to packets, and/or closed.

MARYLAND EDUCATION

The JSES followed similar timelines and protocols that were aligned with local school systems (LSSs) in Maryland. On March 12, 2020, Dr. Karen Salmon, Maryland State Superintendent of Schools closed all schools for the entire state effective Monday, March 16, through March 27. Local school systems and the JSES used this time to develop Continuity of Learning Plans for implementation during the first week of April. On March 26, 2020, LSSs were closed until April 24, 2020. On April 17, school closures were extended until May 15. The final closure announcement was made on May 6 for the remainder of the year.

In response to the March 12 notification, the JSES began to prepare for the possibility of JSES schools closing. The JSES schools did not close on March 12. Normal school operations continued until March 25, 2020, a time frame that was beyond that of LSSs. During that time, the JSES reached out to most of the LSSs to verify how they were providing educational services to their students and immediately began working to develop a plan that aligned with how the LSSs were providing services to students.

The JSES curriculum, instruction, special education, and technology teams worked collaboratively with JSES teachers and principals to develop an effective schedule for virtual learning. The schedule for instruction was designed to utilize available resources and provide continuity of learning that was in alignment with LSSs and national efforts. Once plans were in place, and prior to implementation, the JSES worked collaboratively with DJS leadership through several workgroup sessions that was specifically developed to discuss Continuity of Learning Plan to ensure a smooth transition, effective communication, and access to resources using the state provided Google Drive.

Below is the implementation timeline since March 16, 2020 through June 30th.

Date	JSES COVID-19 Timeline of Operations
3.16.2020	MSDE JSES coordinators began working on content instructional materials to be used if schools were closed (Math, English/language arts, Social Studies, Science, and Career Technology Education).
3.18.2020	Additional Nooks were purchased and loaded with 75 books.
3.18.2020	Work began with schools and the Department of Information Technology (DoIT) to determine streaming capacity based on bandwidth infrastructure and classroom technology. MSDE began to work on a virtual class streaming plans based on student enrollment and courses.
3.18.2020	The JSES requested support from DJS with cleaning of schools.
3.19.2020	Teachers and principals were surveyed which was based on plans and suggestions moving forward if the JSES schools closed.
3.20.2020	Due to the unavailability of food service for students, DJS closed the J. DeWeese Carter Center and students were moved to Lower Eastern Shore Children’s Center.

3.23.2020	DJS reduced class size to 10 people per classroom.
3.24.2020	The JSES contacted local school systems to determine how they were providing materials and instruction to students in their districts.
3.24.2020	The JSES head quarter team reviewed and finalized virtual streaming schedules for principals and staff.
3.25.2020	Professional development was provided for all JSES school staff. Staff began preparing instructional materials for students in coordination with instructional material provided by JSES coordinators.
3.25.2020	A technology conference call was scheduled regarding video streaming. The call was scheduled for 3.26.2020 at 2:00 with the DJS and the MSDE JSES.
3.25.2020	Conference call held with principals and field directors. Closure plans were developed and based on the following: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Daily conference calls with teachers during teleworking (all principals opened up free conference lines) - Creating lesson plans - Constructing virtual learning school schedules - Work distribution including delivery to students/pick-up/grading - Grading and Power School updates - Follow up with DJS (communication schedule) - Professional development schedule availability and streaming processes - Proposed draft schedule for principals - Documents for the principals to reference - Updating iPads, installing zoom, and Zoom meetings

3.26.2020	<p>Weekly professional development and training schedule start date set for Friday March 27 to April 6.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - School counselors and school psychologists – Fridays 8:30 – 9:30 - Special education teachers- Tuesdays and Thursdays 2:30 – 3:30 - Curriculum writers and content leads – Everyday 9:00 – 10:30 - Instructional coaches – Everyday 1:30 – 2:30 <p>The schedule above outlines specific times for professional development. The JSES built a digital learning program. The JSES coordinators included principals on calendar invites for their teachers.</p> <p>This schedule started on March 26, 2020, and the schedule was adjusted once JSES began streaming into classrooms.</p>
3.27.2020	<p>Bandwidth stress test conducted at all school sites.</p> <p>Blended workgroup meeting with DJS and MSDE held to discuss the virtual streaming implementation plan.</p>
3.30.2020	<p>New Nooks were delivered to treatment facilities and then delivered to detention facilities as available. Carter Center Nooks were redistributed since the school was closed.</p>
3.30.2020	<p>Weekly streaming lead teacher meetings began.</p>
3.30.2020	<p>Weekly CTE teacher meetings began.</p>
3.30.2020	<p>Special education teacher meetings began twice a week.</p>

3.31.2020	Blended workgroup meeting with DJS and MSDE conducted for virtual streaming implementation.
4.1.2020	Google share drive created for MSDE to provide DJS staff with maryland.gov emails and access to all COVID 19 resources (master schedule, student schedules, best practices for Resident Assistance support, etc.).
4.2.2020	<p>MSDE meeting with DJS leadership, facility Superintendents, and Superintendent’s designees to review the Virtual Streaming Implementation Plan, give access to the share folders, and provide MSDE direct contact information for the field director and technology staff for support during implementation.</p> <p>Blended workgroup meeting with DJS and MSDE was conducted for virtual streaming implementation.</p>
4.3.2020	The document titled “Monday” was shared with DJS leadership and placed in each Superintendent’s share folder. The document provided step by step support in preparation for the first day (Monday, April 6th) and detailed morning events.
4.5.2020	The DoIT and MSDE’s Chief Information Officer (CIO) announced that ZOOM was hacked and MSDE staff were not allowed to use ZOOM to host any meetings moving forward. MSDE created a new schedule for Google Hangouts and provided DJS leadership and Superintendents shared drives with the updated information as a temporary solution. The streaming schedule did not change, the platform for streaming was adjusted.
4.6.2020	<p>Blended workgroup meeting with DJS and MSDE was conducted for virtual streaming implementation.</p> <p>MSDE’s CIO provided MSDE JSES with access to Web-Ex for streaming solutions.</p>

4.6.2020	<p>A new staff professional development and virtual streaming support schedule was implemented.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Compliance coordinator support for office hours: M-F 7:30-8:30 - Media specialist and individualized learning coordinator support for office hours: M-F 8:00-9:00am - School counselor and psychologist meeting: Friday 8:30-9:30 - CTE lead teacher meetings: Tues. and Thurs. 9:00-9:45 - Special education coordinator support office hours: M-F-10:00-11:00 - CTE teacher meetings: Tues. and Thurs. 10:00-10:45a.m. - Instructional technology support office Hours: M, W, F- 11:00-11:30 - Academic coach support office hours: M, W, F-11:00-12:00 - Power school support office hours: W- 12:00-12:30 - Instructional coach meetings: M-F 1:30-2:30 - Special education teacher meetings: Tues. and Thurs. 2:30-3:30 - Lead teacher meetings: F- 3:00-4:00 - Principal-school based staff meetings: Daily: time varies by school site - Content streaming planning meetings weekly, one hour a week: Time varied by subject and content
4.6-10.2020	<p>MSDE field director and technology support staff visited all JSES schools to deliver Chromebooks. The team also provided additional technology support to ensure that virtual streaming equipment and classrooms were able to provide instruction.</p>
4.9.2020	<p>Blended workgroup meeting with DJS and MSDE was conducted for virtual streaming implementation.</p> <p>The JSES leadership team met with the DJS Executive Director for the monthly collaboration and communication meeting.</p>
4.10.2020	<p>MSDE updated logins and resources for virtual streaming on WebEx and shared all information with DJS staff and Superintendents. The streaming schedule did not change, only the platform for streaming was amended.</p>
4.10.2020	<p>The JSES began weekly school counselor meetings.</p>

4.13.2020	The JSES mailed 3rd quarter report cards and Special Education Progress Reports to the students' mailing address.
4.15.2020	Blended workgroup meeting with DJS and MSDE was cancelled. MSDE had provided tech support to all facilities and virtual streaming had begun. The JSES completed the Continuity of Learning Plan.
4.15.2020	The JSES sent written correspondences to parents/guardians of special education students informing them of special education services provided during COVID-19.
4.15.2020	Principals and HQ scheduled daily observations of virtual streaming classes.
4.22.2020	MSDE and DJS met to discuss virtual streaming, instructional work schedules, and strategies for overall student success.
4.24.2020	MSDE provided DJS with the Strategies for Success document to be implemented in the facilities. The document was based on the meeting held on 4.22.
4.20-27.2020	Additional Nooks were provided to Western Maryland Children's Center, Baltimore City Juvenile Justice Center, Hickey, and Cheltenham. Parents of special education students were called and informed about special education services provided during COVID 19. IEP meetings were held for parents who had concerns about students' special education services.
4.27.2020	Case management and additional support classes were created for special education students. The JSES met with Green Ridge Superintendent and both Executive Directors for DJS to discuss scheduling and learning packets

4.28.2020	The JSES Continuity of Learning Plan was uploaded to the MSDE/JSES website.
5.1.2020	The JSES met with the Office of Public Defender and Maryland Disability Rights staff.
5.4.2020	The JSES provided additional Nooks to Waxter and Noyes. Most spring facility meetings with the DJS Superintendents and JSES leadership completed (exceptions: Carter, Cullen (5-13), WMCC (5-13).
5.5.2020	The JSES tech support staff visited Cheltenham to assist in setting up streaming rooms, locate access points, and offered additional support to MSDE and DJS staff. The JSES uploaded the new Organizational chart to the JSES website.
5.8.2020	Starting on 5.8, the JSES updated all instructional material boxes to include individual student schedules at the request of DJS. The schedules were provided previously on the shared drive between JSES and DJS.
5.14.2020	The JSES leadership team met with DJS Executive Director for the monthly collaboration and communication meeting.
5.15.2020	The JSES updated the master schedule with student and special education schedules by combining them into one document.
5.18.2020	The new schedule format was shared with both Executive Directors for DJS and information provided about locating them in the School/Facility shared drive. The new schedule will be updated weekly to ensure accuracy with the student population in alignment with their units and facilities.

5.19.2020	The JSES reviewed the new schedule with a DJS Executive Director. The Executive Director informed MSDE that some DJS Superintendents did not have a working knowledge of using the Maryland Google Drive. The JSES Field Director provided her email and work cell phone number for anyone in need of support.
5.20.2020	The JSES provided the DJS Executive Director an instruction guide for the DJS Superintendents on how to access the Google Drive and download needed documents.
5.20.2020	The JSES provided DJS with attendance data information for the prior three weeks.
5.22.2020	The JSES School Performance Team met with the Deputy Secretary for DJS to review the webinar attendance data and answered any questions his team may have had regarding attendance and support. The JSES team also assisted the Deputy Secretary with: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - How to navigate the Maryland Government Google Shared Drive - Reviewing the Webex attendance codes for DJS RA's (to be used on the DJS computers when possible with quarantined students) - How to access the recorded webinar folder
5.26.2020	The JSES technology team provided the DJS Superintendents with Google Drive training.
5.26.2020	The JSES team met with the MSDE Deputy Superintendent about the 2020 Summer Educational Plan.
5.27.2020	Initial conversation was conducted with the Deputy Secretary for DJS regarding summer school planning needs.
6.4.2020	The JSES team met to begin summer program planning.

6.10.2020	<p>Joint MSDE and DJS leadership meeting held regarding education returning to face to face schedule, technology, professional development, and COVID-19 protocols.</p> <p>The JSES technology team completed a site visit at BCJJC to complete a network survey and inventory review.</p>
6.11.2020	<p>The JSES leadership team met with the DJS Executive Director for the monthly collaboration and communication meeting.</p> <p>The JSES HQ staff met to reorganize the June professional development plan due to teachers reporting to the building on June 22 and teaching students through July 2nd.</p>
6.12.2020	<p>The JSES technology team completed a site visit at Hickey to complete a network survey and inventory review.</p>
6.15.2020	<p>The JSES technology team disassembled and removed all technology except the Xerox machine and interactive boards from the Carter Center.</p>
6.16.2020	<p>The JSES technology team completed a site visit at Lower Eastern Shore Children Center to complete a network survey and inventory review.</p>
6.17.2020	<p>The JSES leadership team met with stakeholders (Office of Public Defender, Disability Rights, and DJS) to provide the plans for summer school and provide time for Q & A.</p>
6.18.2020	<p>The JSES technology team completed a site visit at Cheltenham and Noyes to complete a network survey and inventory review.</p>
6.19.2020	<p>The JSES technology team completed a site visit at Waxter to complete a network survey and inventory review.</p>

6.22.2020	<p>All JSES school staff return to the schools for face to face instruction.</p> <p>The JSES technology team disassembled and removed all technology except the Xerox machine and interactive boards from Meadow Mountain Youth Center.</p> <p>All staff participate in school based professional development.</p>
6.23.2020	<p>All teachers participate in content assessment focused collaboration and professional development.</p> <p>The JSES technology team completed a site visit at Garrett and Backbone to complete a network survey and inventory review. Technology from Meadow was also distributed and installed at both schools.</p>
6.24.2020	<p>All teachers participate in curriculum planning collaboration and professional development.</p> <p>The JSES technology team completed a site visit at Green Ridge and Western Maryland to complete a network survey and inventory review. Technology from Meadow was also distributed and installed at both schools.</p>
6.25.2020	<p>All teachers participate in a data review professional development.</p> <p>The JSES technology team completed a site visit at Cullen to complete a network survey and inventory review. Technology from Meadow was distributed and installed at the school.</p>
6.26.2020	<p>All teachers participate in curriculum planning collaboration and professional development.</p>
6.29.2020	<p>All teachers participate in professional development on the following topics:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Classroom Management with Chromebooks - The JSES technology help desk and summer gradebook -Intro to Google Classroom

6.29.2020	All teachers enrolled in Google Classroom as students for an eight week course on teaching using Google Classroom as a learning management system.
-----------	--

DJS COLLABORATION AND SUPPORT

“No MSDE JSES staff were on-site to ensure smooth delivery and offer assistance to youth or technical help to DJS staffers during the virtual learning sessions” (p. 39). The statement above is not accurate. The timeline shared in this response provide multiple examples of collaborative meetings, trainings, assistance for students, and support to DJS. Many MSDE staff developed a detailed schedule, provided training for DJS staff, and assisted daily with tech support through email and phone access to the JSES technology team. DJS staff duties consisted of turning on one computer in no more than two to four classrooms a day, signing into a Webex meeting in each classroom, and typing questions in the chat box on behalf of the students. JSES principals contacted schools twice a day to see if individual students needed additional assistance and arranged for special education teachers to work with those students the same day. DJS staff only needed to have students at the computers or on the phone.

All JSES documents were developed to ensure support through best practices and included suggestions for success were provided to DJS. The DJS Resident Assistants signed into the virtual learning classes and the JSES teachers provided instruction, referenced and followed instructional materials for the week, answered questions, and supported the student learning process.

“During this prolonged period, MSDE JSES administrators did not plan and coordinate with DJS staff to ensure appropriate delivery of education services and materials in the absence of in-person classes for students at Hickey” was stated on page 26 of the JJMU report. DJS staff at Hickey was provided the same professional development as all other DJS facilities. In fact, during the first week of streaming Hickey staff were provided with in person support from JSES HQ staff and the school principal.

Another incorrect statement is stated on page 31 of the report. “However, at time of writing, plans to renew the arrangement for the 2020- 2021 school year have not been finalized by MSDE administrators. Leadership at MSDE and MSDE JSES should continue working collaboratively with MCPS to ensure that supports and services provided through MCPS to the school at Noyes can continue.” Both Montgomery County Public Schools and the JSES have continued collaboration related to Noyes and a determination has been made that collaborative efforts will continue throughout the 2020-2021 school year.

Similar to all local school systems, the efforts and focus of JSES continues to center on ensuring that state required plans and responses to COVID-19 are thoughtfully developed, equitable, and designed to meet the needs of all students at all schools. The JSES Recovery Plan was submitted to MSDE by the deadline of August 14, 2020. The JSES Recovery Plan can be found at:

<http://marylandpublicschools.org/programs/Documents/JSE/JSESRecoveryPlan2020-2021.pdf>

SPECIAL EDUCATION

Information on pages four and five of the JJMU report states, “From early April until the summer session began in July, youth did not have access to in-person education staff for instruction or assistance with school work. Students attended virtual lectures (often presented by teachers students did not know) for just a few hours each week. During the remainder of the designated six-hour school day, students were reduced to attempting to complete packets of worksheets on their own (or with help from some DJS line staff).”

This statement is erroneous. From the end of April until the end of June when teaching staff returned to the buildings, special education students were provided access to a special education teacher for questions on Tuesday, Wednesday, and Thursday afternoons during all instructional blocks. Students were also provided access to their special education case manager at least once a week in the morning to monitor student progress and to provide additional instructional support.

The JJMU report also states, “During the reporting period, many students reported having trouble following lessons and commented that they would gradually “tune out” during the online class periods. Students with learning-related difficulties such as ADHD had a particularly difficult time with virtual learning as it was implemented by MSDE JSES” (pg. 39-40). The fact is that students with disabilities that might struggle in a virtual environment were considered during the planning phase for virtual implementation of instruction. Special education students were provided access to special education teachers for one-on-one questions, additional support and/or supplemental instruction. Students also had the opportunity to meet with their special education case manager to provide additional instructional support, when needed.

INSTRUCTION

“During the remainder of the school week, students continued to be relegated to completing worksheets and with no feedback or grading of their work by MSDE employees” was stated on page 39 of the JJMU report. Initially, classwork was not being sent to the school staff for review due to concerns about the potential for spread of COVID-19 through the sharing of classroom materials. This precaution was consistent with Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) guidance, *Consideration for Schools*. Instead, JSES administrators and teachers met with DJS staff to verify completion of work in the same manner that staff from LSSs communicated with parents about the completion of assignments when LSSs were unable to collect student work or when parents were unable to provide student work to school staff electronically. JSES principals began scanning work to teachers for review in June, 2020 when additional CDC guidance deemed it was safe. When in-person instruction resumed, students were given the opportunity to work with teachers in order to get additional support and finish incomplete work.

Additional information shared in the report stated, “Further education was unavailable to the graduates and they reported experiencing extreme boredom (Grievance 16528). Options for high school graduates at all DJS-operated facilities should be substantially expanded” (pg. 35). The fact is that students who

had graduated were provided with an opportunity to enroll in courses at community colleges and the JSES enrolled more students in post-secondary education this year than any year prior. However, students can only enroll in post-secondary courses at the community colleges when enrollment is available. Many community colleges also closed while they were developing plans to provide education during COVID-19.

CONCLUSION

The JJMU gives a directive in stating, “MSDE leadership must (without further delay) prioritize planning for the continuous operation of school services and should commit to ensuring in-person instruction in DJS facilities whenever possible during the fall and spring school semesters. Further elongated disruptions to in-person education programming is likely inevitable due to the recurring presence of infection at detention and placement facilities and so MSDE must institute a carefully and thoughtfully pre-planned, comprehensive and individualized virtual teaching system”. The MSDE has never ceased in placing the educational needs of students in JSES schools as a priority during the numerous, unprecedented challenges facing all schools across the nation. Plans that have been implemented and collaborative initiatives and efforts, proactive actions, and educational successes speak for themselves. Since starting alternative instructional planning in April, the JSES recognized the need to begin preparation and organizing simultaneously for the beginning of the 2020-2021 academic school year and spent the summer:

- Developing plans for blended education
- Collaborating with DJS and an outside organization on teamwork, process, and educational planning
- Providing professional development to both MSDE and DJS staff
- Piloting programs
- Determining bandwidth and access needs at each school
- Conducting stress tests to ensure the success of the implementation of a new educational platform

Students have always been, and will continue to be, our number one priority. We can and will continue to strive to meet the educational needs of students in JSES schools. Collaboration and working with DJS, LSSs, specialist at MSDE, community colleges, and DoIT will remain. Our commitment has never wavered and will remain steadfast during the 2020-2021 school year.