



Maryland Department of
Juvenile Services
Treating • Supporting • Protecting

December 3, 2010

DJS Response

On September 7, 2010, two Baltimore County youth detained at the Charles H. Hickey, Jr. School overpowered a staff member to commandeer his vehicle which they used to break through the fencing at the facility. The youth were seen by posted direct care staff, who maintained a direct line of sight of the youth as the staff immediately pursued them. The staff made immediate contacts to additional DJS staff and law enforcement. These actions resulted in the youth being back in custody in less than half an hour.

The Department promptly notified the community by activating its Community Alert System, which notifies the Hickey community by telephone and email. The Hickey Superintendent and other senior DJS officials also canvassed the neighborhood to personally inform and offer assurances to residents. Three mailboxes were damaged by the youth, all of which were replaced and installed the following day by Hickey staff. Lastly, DJS issued a press release the next morning to inform the public at-large of the incident explaining that the Department's internal investigative officials had commenced a full investigation.

All of the findings about policy violations and the recommendations that were identified in the investigative report issued by the Department's Office of the Inspector General have been resolved through intensive re-training, policy enhancements, and stronger oversight, including:

- Re-trained all staff on policies and procedures for youth supervision and log book documentation; these policies and procedures are also required to be emphasized in all shift briefings, unit meetings, and formal training sessions.
- Strengthened methods of daily communication to inform all staff throughout the facility of youth approved for participation in the "World of Work" program. The program is continuing to operate with ongoing communication to all staff identifying participating youth. The World of Work program has operated without incident and to the benefit of youth at Hickey for three years. Youth approved for participation learn marketable skills in a variety of areas including carpentry, electrical repair, construction and painting.

- Reduced the number of exit points from the facility by installing additional security barriers.
- Increased the number of security posts on the grounds which are fixed locations staffed 24/7 by Resident Advisors trained in youth supervision.
- Installed additional razor wire on the facility's perimeter fence.
- Debriefed with all staffed involved and addressed their actions that contributed to the incident.