



Juvenile Justice Commission

2015 Annual Report



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Mission Statement



The West Virginia Supreme Court of Appeals is committed to a juvenile justice system that promotes effective interventions that will enhance the likelihood of rehabilitation and behavior reform for those children involved in delinquent behavior. It is the Court's desire that West Virginia serve these youths and their families within a sound framework of public safety while providing guidance, structure and appropriate, evidence-based services. Circuit judges need to be confident that those youths whom they sentence to the Industrial Home for Youth at Salem are given, through rehabilitative programs, every opportunity for success after their confinement.

Therefore, the facilities and the programs they include must, from time to time, be examined by the Court not only to ensure that the sentencing judges are very familiar with the environment into which they are sentencing adjudicated juveniles, but also in order to ensure that these programs are appropriate and as effective as they can possibly be. In that manner, the adjudication system itself can be improved by providing more effective intervention at an early stage of juvenile delinquency. Through collaboration and communication between the Court, the Legislature, and the Executive agencies, West Virginia's investment of energy and resources into children who are in trouble will result in the best possible future for the State.

Juvenile Justice Commissioners

The Honorable Omar Aboulhosn
Circuit Judge, Mercer County

The Honorable Gary Johnson
Circuit Judge, Nicholas County

The Honorable J. Lewis Marks, Jr.
Circuit Judge, Harrison County

The Honorable Phillip Stowers
Circuit Judge, Putman County

The Honorable Joanna Tabit
Circuit Judge, Kanawha County

The Honorable Eric O'Briant
Circuit Judge, Logan County

The Honorable Gail Boober, Magistrate
Jefferson County

Bobbi Hatfield, Former State Delegate

Megan Annitto, Assistant Professor
Charlotte School of Law, Charlotte, NC

Jane Moran, Attorney
Jane Moran Law Office, Williamson, WV

The Reverend Rue Thompson
Diocese of Wheeling-Charleston

Sam Hickman, Executive Director
National Association of Social Workers,
WV Chapter

The Reverend Matthew Watts
MJ Watts Ministries, Charleston, WV

Michael J. Martirano, Ed.D.,
State Superintendent of Schools, WVDOE

Represented by:

Cynthia (Cindy) Daniel, Deputy
Superintendent, WVDOE

and

Jacob Green, Special Assistant to the
Associate State Superintendent
Office of Institutional Ed Programs, WVDOE

Chuck Heinlein, Community Representative
Retired WVDOE Deputy Superintendent

Justice Margaret Workman, Ex-Officio

Steve Canterbury, Administrative Director
WV Supreme Court of Appeals

Cindy Largent-Hill, Director Juvenile Justice
Commission, WV Supreme Court of Appeals

Administrative Office Staff:

Kirk Brandfass, General Administrative
Counsel

Tina Payne, Director of Legislative Analysis

Tom Scott, Court Compliance Officer

Alicia Mascioli, Deputy Director of the
Juvenile Justice Commission

Nikki Tennis, Director,
Division of Children's Services, WVSCA

April Harless, Public Information Specialist

Jennifer Bundy, Public Information Officer

Lorri Stotler, Administrative Assistant to
Director Juvenile Justice Commission

A Bit of Background

The Juvenile Justice Commission, previously called the Adjudicated Juvenile Rehabilitation Review Commission, was established by Administrative Order of the Supreme Court of Appeals of West Virginia in July 2011 by then-Chief Justice Margaret Workman. The initial purpose of the Commission was to examine the Division of Juvenile Services' operations programs. Over time, the scope of the Commission's mission has expanded and now encompasses more aspects of the juvenile justice system. The Commission continues, as it has deemed necessary, to be involved in reviewing facilities and programs operated or contracted by the Division of Juvenile Services and the Department of Health and Human Resources. In addition, the Commission looks at strengths, gaps, and needs within West Virginia's juvenile justice processes.

The court system maintains its concern for youths who are removed from their families, homes, and communities and subsequently placed in various types of settings as a result of court orders. Any children ordered into facilities are wards of the courts.



Administrative Order for Juvenile Justice Commission Staff



On July 14, 2015, Chief Justice Margaret Workman signed an amended Administrative Order of the Supreme Court of Appeals of West Virginia. This order added language that supported the expanded scope of the Commission and recently passed legislation related to juvenile justice reform (Senate Bill 393). Specifically, it allows the Commission staff to have full and unimpeded access to witnesses, records, documents, and any other evidence that is relevant to:

1. juveniles in the juvenile justice system, who are either arrested by law enforcement, referred to court for a petition to be filed, or involved in pre-petition diversion;
2. the Court-ordered review of facilities operated by or contracted by the Division of Juvenile Services;
3. review of the facilities, inside and outside the State of West Virginia, that house juveniles in the juvenile justice system who are placed by a signed order of a circuit court judge in West Virginia;
4. aiding circuit court judges in West Virginia in carrying out their adjudicative responsibilities within the juvenile justice system.

Lastly, it orders that Juvenile Probation Officers employed by the Supreme Court are directed to fully cooperate with the Commission staff, and that Commission staff will have complete access to records and evidence related to the full scope of the juvenile justice process.

Composition Changes Within the Commission



Deputy Superintendent Charles K. Heinlein retired from the West Virginia Department of Education on June 30, 2015. During his tenure with the Commission, Mr. Heinlein provided valuable insight to those important education related issues and to the juvenile justice system as a whole. Judge Omar Aboulhosn, Chairman, on behalf of Chief Justice Workman, invited him to continue serving on the Commission as a citizen member. Mr. Heinlein graciously accepted the invitation.

Effective December 31, 2015, Omar Aboulhosn resigned from his position as Mercer County Circuit Court Judge to become the Southern District of West Virginia Federal Magistrate. Judge Aboulhosn is one of the original members of the Juvenile Justice Commission and in 2014 assumed the Chairman, position at the request of Justice Workman. Judge Aboulhosn has consistently demonstrated outstanding leadership and commitment to improving juvenile justice law and the justice process.





With the departure of Judge Aboulhosn, Putnam County Circuit Court Judge Phillip Stowers graciously accepted the invitation by Chief Justice Workman to lead the Commission. Judge Stowers is dedicated to innovative programs that promote juvenile rehabilitation, like drug courts and truancy diversion programs. His vision, creativity, and commitment to juveniles will provide excellent leadership to the Commission.

To fill the vacancy left by Judge Aboulhosn, Chief Justice Workman appointed Logan County Circuit Court Judge Eric O'Briant to the Commission. Judge O'Briant is one of the most experienced judges in our state and during 2015, was appointed to be chairman of two significant committees within the judiciary. He is the chair of the Judicial Association's Juvenile Justice Sub-Committee and also the Juvenile Graduated Sanctions/Responses Committee (both established as a result of Senate Bill 393).



A DEPARTURE AND AN APPOINTMENT

Commission Researches Critical Issues

The Juvenile Justice Commission is committed to a juvenile justice system that promotes effective interventions that will enhance the likelihood of rehabilitation and behavior reform. This commitment is supported by studying national trends, reviewing our state's current practices and promoting what is in the youths' best interest while involved in the juvenile justice system. Outlined below are critical issues reviewed by the Commission during 2015.

Department of Health and Human Resources – Bureau of Children and Families Licensing and Monitoring of Residential Facilities

As a result of information received from presenters and/or from the monitoring of facilities, the Commission requested that Director Cindy Largent-Hill correspond with the Department of Health and Human Resources (DHHR) - Bureau of Children and Families (BCF) Commissioner Nancy Exline on the following matters.

First, in the Commission's opinion, there existed a significant deficit in the notification and communication protocols with the congregate care facilities – specifically between the facility, DHHR and on-site partners, like the Department of Education. Further, it was a bit unclear as to the communication piece of the process when Licensing and/or IIU are alerted to significant problems and situations at a residential facility.

Questions asked of Commissioner Exline included:

1. Is the on-sight personnel included (interviewed) in the investigation process?
2. If it is determined that a facility's license is going to be suspended or terminated, how are those partners notified?
3. If a corrective action plan is established, how are those partners made aware and ultimately included in the development of the plan?

Second, the Commissioner inquired as to how each residential provider establishes its respective admission criteria. And subsequently, does licensing staff review that criteria and confirm that those residents accepted and admitted meet the established criteria? The Commission felt this was a significant concern and further asked if a sanction could be issued if youth are accepted outside of the stated admission criteria.

Third, a concern was presented to the Commission related to free time and outdoor activities offered to residents in congregate care and out-of-home placements. It is the Commission's understanding from information received that there are neither current regulations nor any type of monitoring for

- the availability of programming and activities provided after school, on weekends, and during school breaks;
- confirming a documented activity schedule;
- ensuring that activities are being offered on a regular basis;
- a consistent and regular opportunity for fresh air, exercise and/ or physical activity.

If that is the case, the Juvenile Justice Commission formally requested that the Department of Health and Human Resources-Bureau of Children and Families establish specific guidelines for extracurricular and outside activities (which include fresh air requirements). Accompanying these regulations, a mechanism should be established for enforcement and that there should be consequences if the provider failed to provide the required opportunities.

Commissioner Exline replied to these concerns with the following comments:

- Current licensing legislative rules are not specific in their requirements related to recreation and outdoor activity. To improve this, licensing staff are drafting guidelines related to daily schedules and they will be shared with the residential and psychiatric treatment facilities.
- In light of no specific process, the licensing unit will be establishing a communication protocol specific to community stakeholders which will include education.
- The Bureau of Children and Families' licensing unit does not establish the eligibility for residential placement. It is currently conducted by APS Healthcare.

Indiscriminate Shackling of Juvenile Offenders

A national initiative is considering the issue of indiscriminate shackling of juveniles. Studies show that the overwhelming majority of juveniles are in court for non-violent offenses. Some states have instituted measures embracing the least restrictive alternative means available to the court and imposed use of restraints only to prevent harm to the juvenile or others, or to prevent flight. The Commission requested that staff study this topic, look at national trends, research other states' protocols, and prepare discovered information for review. The Commission reviewed the information provided and unanimously agreed to forward the information to the Judicial Association's Juvenile Justice Committee.

Disproportionate Minority Confinement

The West Virginia Intergovernmental Task Force issued findings which encouraged addressing the issue of disproportionate minority contact within the juvenile justice system. After reviewing this recommendation in combination of the information learned, the Commission decided to establish a task team to look at related issues which includes juvenile justice system awareness, pilot programs, data collection, and training opportunities.

US Department of Justice

The United States Department of Justice, over the course of several months, conducted an investigation of our state's children's mental health system. Their findings were sent to Governor Earl Ray Tomblin on June 1, 2015. A summary of the findings from that investigation follow.

- A. West Virginia over relies on residential facilities and continues to build more segregated programs.
- B. West Virginia fails to provide in-home and community-based mental health services for children.
- C. West Virginia, in its failure to provide integrated services, places children at risk of unnecessary institutionalization.
- D. West Virginians would like to have more community-based mental health services.

The Commission feels strongly that the information provided in the report, in addition to the findings, conclusions, and recommendations provides a conduit to increasing, improving, and enhancing services for youths plagued with mental health issues – especially those seen in the juvenile justice system. Because this is a primary concern of the judiciary, Commission staff facilitated a round table discussion between representatives of the United States Department of Justice and judges from across the state. A team, organized by the Judicial Association, including three Commissioners and Commission staff, will have regular conversations with Department of Justice representatives.

Resolution of STATE OF WEST VIRGINIA ex rel. D.L. and K.P. v. STEPHANIE BOND, Acting Director, Division of Juvenile Services, and DAVID JONES, Superintendent of the West Virginia Industrial Home for Youth

The matter STATE OF WEST VIRGINIA ex rel. D.L. and K.P. (represented by Mountain State Justice) v. STEPHANIE BOND, Acting Director, Division of Juvenile Services, and DAVID JONES, Superintendent of the West Virginia Industrial Home for Youth was resolved by a final order. The Honorable Omar Aboulhosn entered the order into record on January 21, 2014. Included in this order was a directive specific to the Adjudicated Juvenile Rehabilitation Review Commission. In Section V, entitled "Continued Monitoring," it was ordered that the monitoring of the Division of Juvenile Services' facilities continue under the direction and control of the Adjudicated Juvenile Rehabilitation Review Commission.

Commission Staff continues to monitor the Division of Juvenile Services' facilities as ordered. The staff is pleased to report that the relationship between the Commission and the Division of Juvenile Services is a strong collaborative partnership. Director Bond and her administrative staff continue to look at national trends and evidence-based programs that address and enhance programming with the goal of rehabilitation and success for juveniles.

Department of Health and Human Resources' licensed and/or contracted facilities (in and out-of-state) are visited in addition to the Division of Juvenile Services' facilities. A focus has been those facilities under the scrutiny of licensing and/or those with imposed corrective action plans.

An additional task assumed by Commission staff involves working with those youth in detention facilities that have significant mental health symptoms, low cognitive functioning and/or extreme behaviors. With complex presenting issues, these youth are difficult to treat or place in treatment facilities. As a result, those youth are placed in detention and have longer stays while there.

Juvenile Justice Reform During 2015 Legislative Session

The West Virginia Legislature tackled juvenile justice reform by passing Senate Bill 393, which came as a result of the work of the West Virginia Intergovernmental Task Force (formed by Governor Earl Ray Tomblin in 2014). Several Juvenile Justice Commissioners served on that task force. Some of the initiatives included in this reform legislation are stated below.

- Truancy diversion specialists can be put into place in all fifty-five counties. They will provide and/or organize early intervention services to those children in a pre-petition capacity.
- A diversion process which includes assessment, agreements, and supportive teams encourages compliance before a court petition is filed.
- Youth reporting centers (that have proven success with high risk youth while allowing them to remain in the community) are to be expanded throughout the state.
- Evidence based services and data collection for all agencies providing services to this population is mandated.
- Division of Juvenile Services diagnostic placements will be limited to high-risk or violent juveniles (as determined by risk assessments) and limited to thirty days length of stay.
- Status offenders will no longer be detained in Division of Juvenile Services custody nor placed in a Division of Juvenile Services facility.
- The Department of Health and Human Resources will transition youth in their funded facilities to community services within thirty to ninety days. If an extension is necessary, the court may order additional time.
- Department of Health and Human Resources' providers will create case plans that include treatment goals as determined by a risk and needs assessment and MDT recommendations. DHHR providers will create aftercare plans which will enhance the resident's transition into the community.
- Graduated sanctions and incentives may be developed to address probation violations.
- A Juvenile Justice Reform Oversight Committee will be established to oversee the implementation of reform measures. Members include two circuit court judges, the Supreme Court Administrative Director, and the Director of the Juvenile Justice Commission.



Opportunities to Learn and Understand

The Commission realizes and respects that the juvenile justice system is complicated and ever changing. To better understand these complexities, the Commission has embraced a protocol of inviting guests from other branches of state government and/or agencies with expertise on juvenile-related issues to speak during the quarterly meetings. An overview of topics presented to the Commission during 2015 follows.



Department of Education, Office of Institutional Education Programs – Transition Services Overview (provided by Jacob Green, Special Assistant to the Associate State Superintendent and Kari Rice, Coordinator.)

Transition Specialists are based jurisdictionally across the state. They are the liaisons between the public school system, county/community resources, parent, the Division of Juvenile Services, the Department of Health and Human Resources, and any other entity working in the best interest of the youth. An additional resource is an out-of-state transitional specialist whose responsibilities include visiting and monitoring education programs and ensuring that credits earned are transferred back to the receiving/transition school system.

Department of Health and Human Resources – Bureau for Children and Families – Licensing Criteria and Compliance Monitoring (provided by Sue Hage, Deputy Commissioner and Christina Bertelli-Coleman, Program Manager)

A presentation reviewed the licensing process for Residential Child Care Facilities and Child Placing Agencies, in addition to the regulations, requirements, and protocols for corrective action plans, suspensions, and closures. The Institutional Investigative Unit (IIU) investigates abuse and neglect reports, including those youth in out-of-home placements. They investigate schools, daycare, and any residential facilities.



Disproportionate Minority Confinement (DMC) – Dr. Stephen M. Haas, Ph.D., Director of the Office of Research and Strategic Plan with the DOJ Services, and Mr. Lee Leftwich, DMC Coordinator

A study, completed in 2004, took a systemic look at each stage of the process. This report was able to say clearly that even after we've taken into account delinquent history and the seriousness of the offense, racial disparity exists.

West Side Revive (provided by Reverend Matthew Watts, MJ Watts Ministries)

Charleston West Virginia's West Side is struggling with a disproportionate amount of crime. A comprehensive plan, holistic to the revitalization of the West Side, has a unique approach, with a goal to be a model community of health and wellness for the children and families who reside there. The hope is to make the West Side of Charleston a demonstration project to address child and adult poverty and to address the social terms of health through a comprehensive model.



Children's mental health needs and the local school system (provided by John Kennedy, Community Schools Coordinator, RESA 1)

School systems struggle because of the lack of mental health services available to the students. Many youth involved in the juvenile justice system are there because of the lack of mental health services in their communities. Systemically, mental Health needs can and should be addressed in the school building, during the school day.



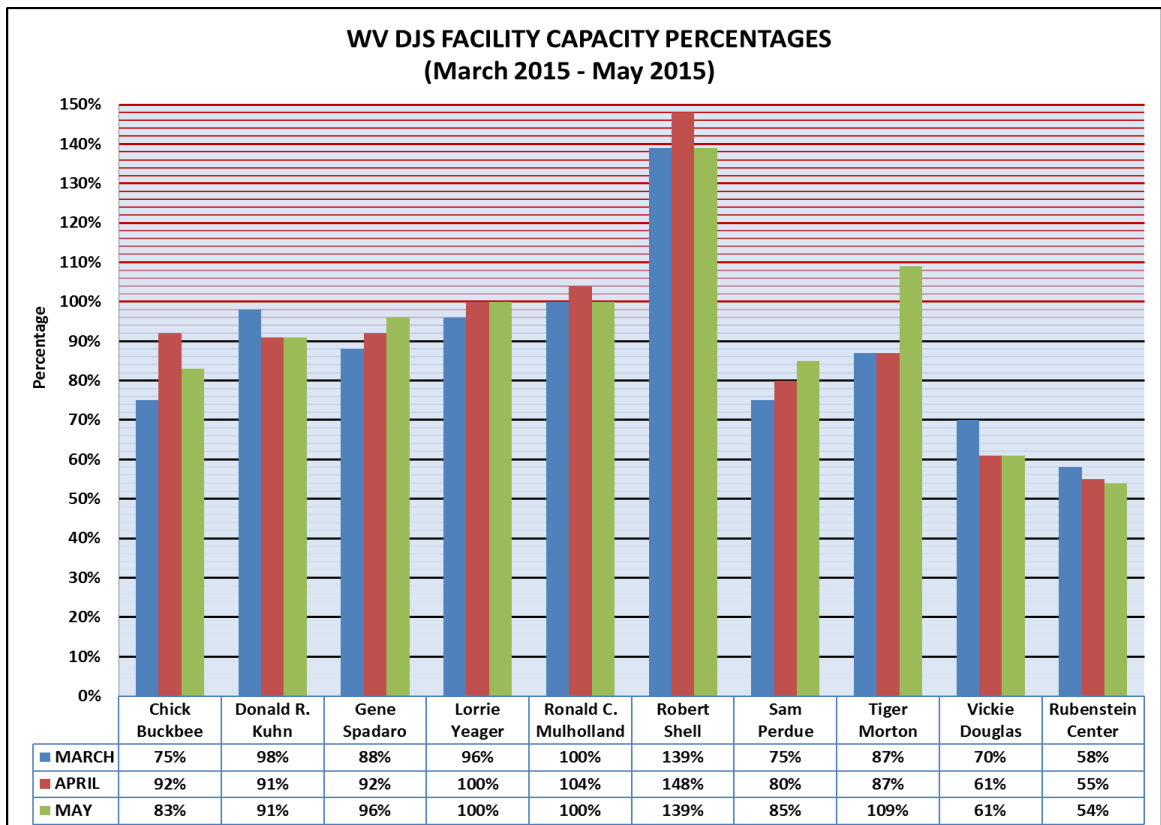
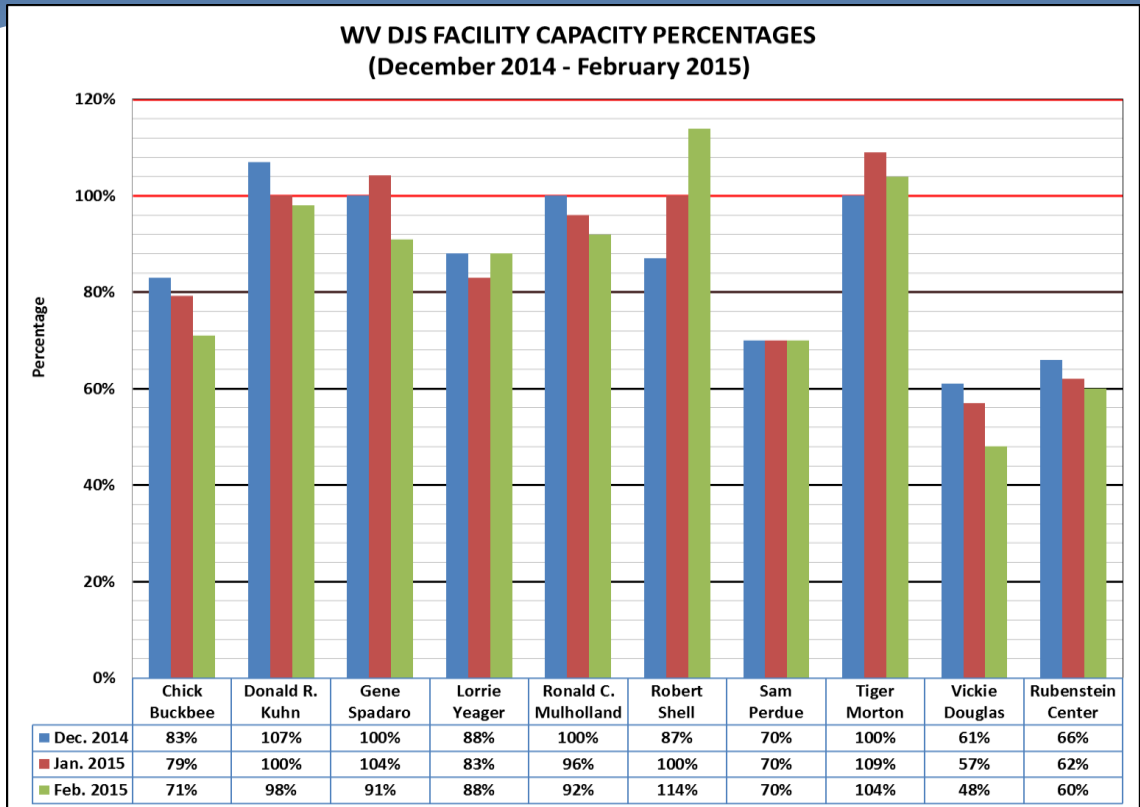
Donald R. Kuhn Juvenile Facility – Programs Overview and Facility Update (provided by Stephanie Bond, Division of Juvenile Services Director, John Marchio, Donald R. Kuhn Interim Superintendent, and Donald R. Kuhn staff)

This maximum and medium security facility houses three populations: detention, diagnostic, and commitment. Youth at this facility are provided various treatment programs and academic services.

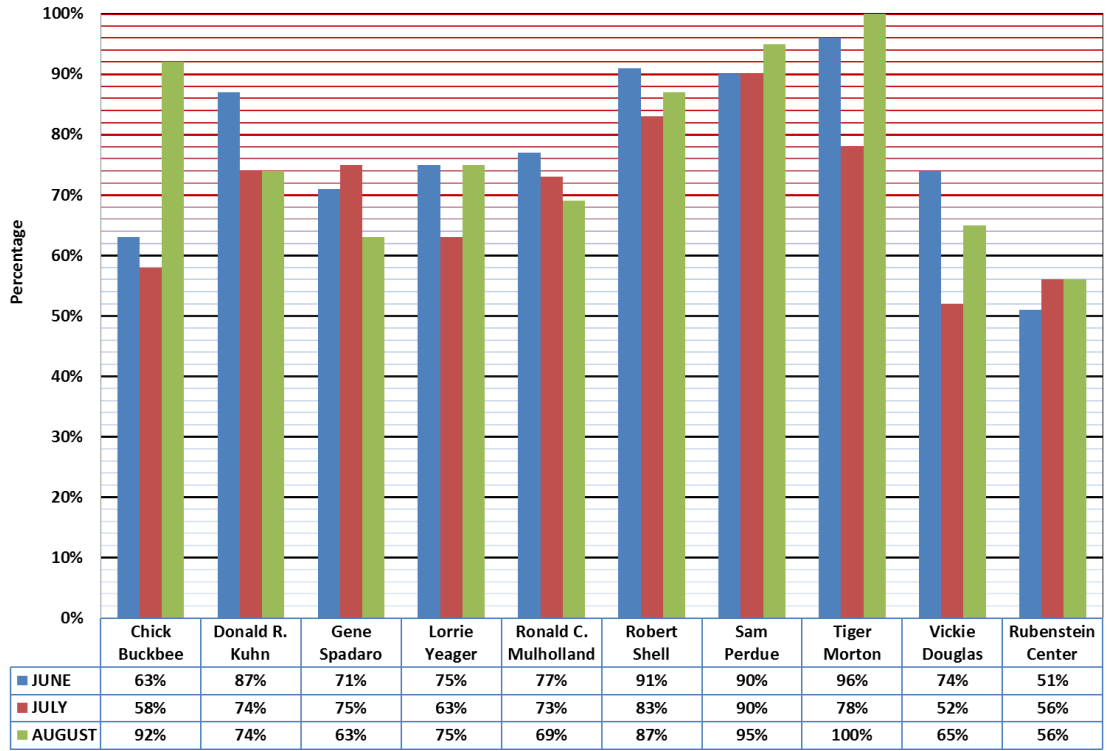
The facility has committed to and is in the process of establishing Performance-based Standards (PbS), endorsed by the Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention (OJJDP). PbS is a data- driven model that provides standards and guidelines for operations and programs.



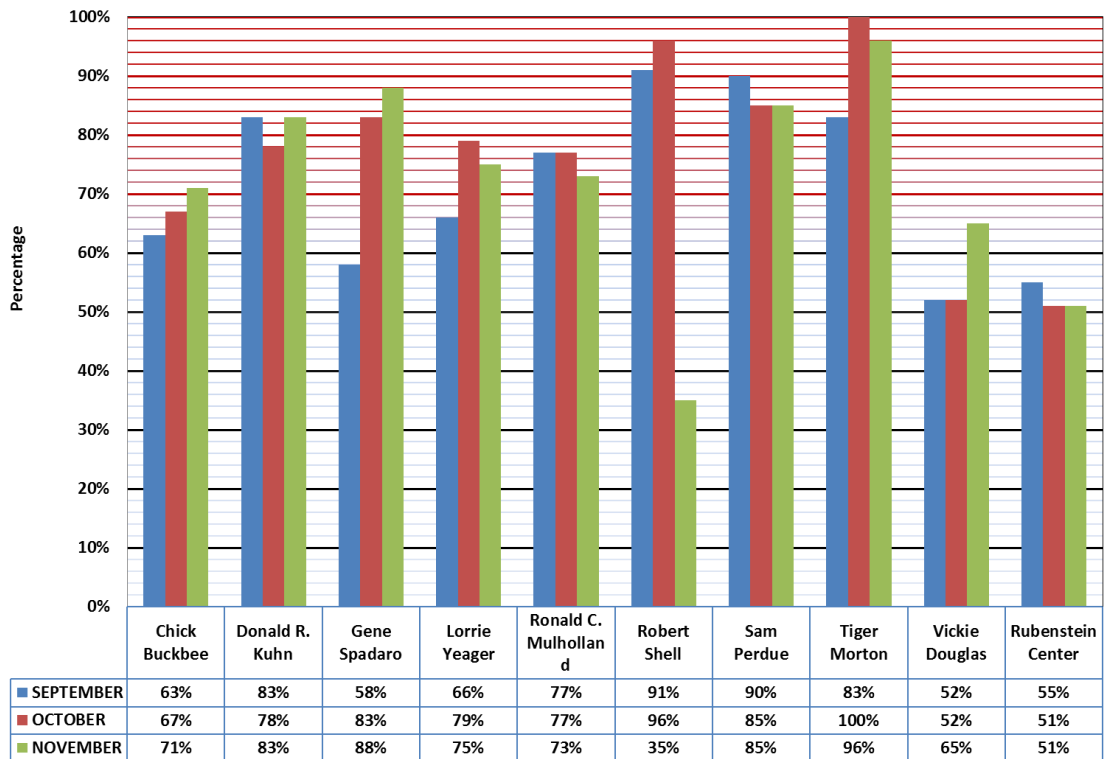
Quarterly Capacity Reports for DJS Facilities



**WV DJS FACILITY CAPACITY PERCENTAGES
(June 2015 - August 2015)**



**WV DJS FACILITY CAPACITY PERCENTAGES
(September 2015 - November 2015)**

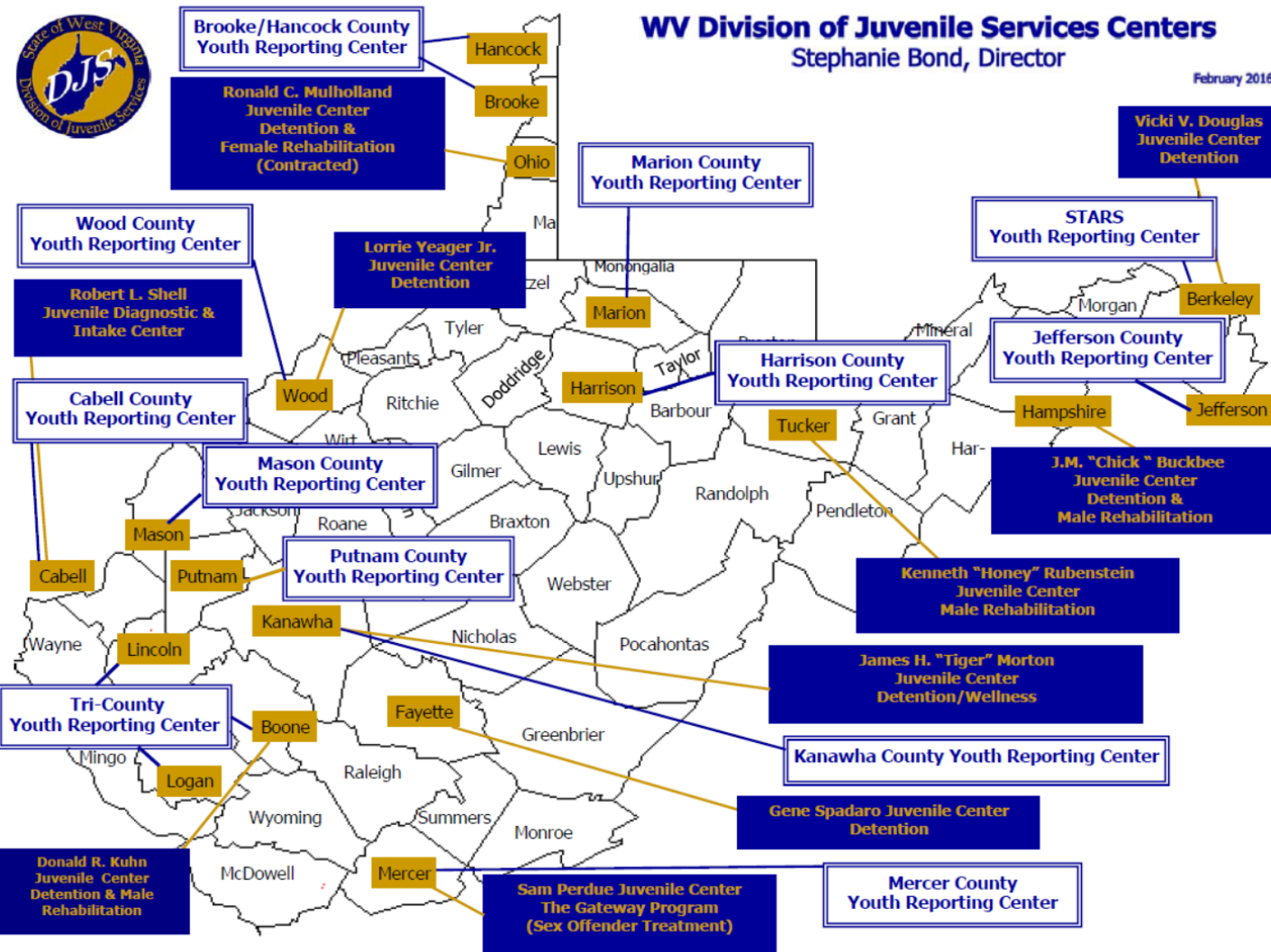


All WV Facilities Map



WV Division of Juvenile Services Centers
Stephanie Bond, Director

February 2016



Quarterly Facility Monitoring Summary (1 Page)

Facility	Date	Findings	Remedy
Chick Buckbee Hampshire Co. (detention & commitment)			
Donald R. Kuhn Boone Co. (detention, diagnostic, max/med commitment)			
Gene Spadaro Fayette Co (detention)			
Lorrie Yeager Wood Co. (detention)			
Northern Regional Ohio Co. (detention & female commitment)			
Sam Perdue Mercer Co. (sex offender)			
Robert Shell Cabell Co (status offender – DHHR)			
Tiger Morton Kanawha County (detention & beh. health commitment)			
Vicki Douglas Berkeley Co (detention)			
Rubenstein Center Tucker Co (med/min commitment)			

Note: Director receives monthly Self Harm Reviews. DJS conducts a clinical and procedural review of ALL suicide management interventions that occur in the DJS facilities. Those reviews include a summary of the incident, policy issues, training issues, precipitating factors and recommendations for changes. There are also sections to address concerns & remedies.

Facility Report Form (4 Pages)

Facility: _____ **Census:** _____ **Date:** _____

General Issues	Per Court Order	Current us	Staff / Resident
Residents are out of rooms 6 am – 8 pm; 7 days/week (A. 1.)			
Programming/Activities are offered for most of day/evening (A.1.)	On unit programming/written schedule posted (1. & 2.)		
Unit has an hourly detailed activity schedule & it is followed (A.2.)	Hourly programming posted schedule (2. & 3.)		
Outdoor recreation is offered 1 hour/weekdays and 2 hours/weekends (A. 4.)	Organized daily outside recreation (i.e. sports and positive organized activities) (4)		
Resident Handbook (D. 19.)	Handbook-range of potential sanctions for each violation (19.)		
Food is not w/held due to punishment (H. 47. a)			
Residents talk during meals (H. 48)			
Residents are not cuffed/shackled during movement on unit (H. 47. b)			
No random strip searches (H. 49)			
Visitation is available daily (H. 52. a)	Visitation programming (52. d & (52. e)		
Visitation Coordinator (H. 52. c)	No visitation coordinator actively performing functions (52. c)		
Visitation area & plan (H. 52 d & e)	Visitation plan with specifics (52. e)		
Prison clothing changes	Slacks and polo shirts – no prison garb (H. 50.)		
Shoes provided include athletic, good quality (not flops) (H. 51.)			

Girls' hair can touch neck (H. 50.c.)			
Mattress, pillow and clothing storage (H. 53)	Room Accommodations (53.)		
Bathroom Access: Toilet at night; toilet paper (H. 54.a. & b.)			
Room Confinement			
DJS Policy 332.00: <i>Specialized housing is used for residents who are separated from others due to medical necessity, sanctions, behavioral concerns, a court order, or protective custody</i>	NO ROOM CONFINEMENT (whether doors open or closed) No LOH, no CO sending to room; no euphemisms such as EBT; no lockdowns; not sending to room before & after meals) (A.1.)		
Incidents are documented – with reason, staff initiating, duration (B. 7.)			
Access to daily shower, large muscle recreation, similar food, education (B. 8.)			
Medical and/or mental health talked with resident daily (face/face; not thru door) (B.9.)			
Time Out not to exceed 4 hours (out of control) (B.10.)	Time out only while not in control (not in control means actively engaged in physically disruptive conduct at that moment) (10. & 11.)		
Time Out exceeding 4 hours approved by Admin. (B.11.)			
Confinement due to major infraction not to exceed 3 days (B. 12.)			
Due process was used (B.13.)			

Ad Seg (sparingly) not to exceed 10 days; direct order & detailed reasons available in writing (B. 14.)	Per DJS Policy 332.00: Beh Mgmt Plan developed in 2 calendar days by tx team		
Resident on Ad Seg can verbally explain why and process to be removed (B. 15.)			
Ad Seg exceeding 10 days involves C'Office (B. 16.)	Per DJS Policy 332.00: 7 day perpetual review by Facility Admin		
Modified Procedures for Safety			
DJS Policy 332.00: Residents may be segregated prior to hearing if they are being physically aggressive with other staff and/or residents and are not amenable to reasonable direction and control.	Per May 3, 2013 Order: To provide for the safety and protection of residents & staff; when resident is physically aggressive & is NOT amenable to reasonable direction & control		
Immediate sanction of room confinement up to 3 days	Severe cases up to 10 days – determined by due process		
Due Process hearing held within 24 hours	As outlined in November 27, 2012 Order		
Specialized Housing procedures should be followed	As outlined in November 27, 2012 Order		
Mechanical restraints used for resident movement in facility	Determined by Supt/Director; only as a SAFETY measure		
Written notice is made	Forwarded to Monitor with explanation		
Immediate notice to court, monitor & parties' counsel; within 24 hours	Every time the procedures outlined in May 3 Order are implemented		
Suicidal Procedures			
Protocol was followed as outlined.	DJS to provide monthly reports to Monitor.		
Disciplinary Due Process			
Resident received written notice of violation 24 hours before hearing (no punish prior to) (D. 21.)	Receive and retain written notice of rule violation at least 24 hour prior to hearing (21)		
Resident was heard during hearing & has witnesses (D. 22.)	Hearing – opportunity to present witnesses (22)		
Resident received written decision with reasons and sanctions; based upon evidence (D. 23. 24.)	No prehearing sanctions (25) Written decision – nature & duration of sanctions (24) Written decision based only on evidence at hearing (24)		
Right to appeal decision (D. 26.)	Right to appeal (26)		
Tracking process (D.27.)			

Grievance Process			
Access to process – locked box; handled by Supt/Director (E. 29 30.)			
Receive written copy of decision (E. 32.)			
Tracking process (E. 33.)			
Other			
Mail: scanned in front of resident; if censored resident notified (F. 35.)			
Resident receive 10 stamps/month; delivered immediately; photos permitted; receive writing supplies (F. 39. & 40. 41. & 42.)			
Telephone: free calls/week minimum of 15 min.; reasonable privacy (G. 43.)			
Permitted to receive calls from attorneys, other professionals & close family any time; unrestricted legal calls (G. 45. & 46.)			
Residents received 3 meals/day and 1-2 snack/day (IV. MEALS) Menus are posted.	Final Order – advanced menus, planned menus that are followed & posted. Snacks provided.		

Items to be tracked for Juvenile Justice Commission

MDT Meetings			
Was MDT held prior to placement (other than detention)	N/A		
Quarterly MDT's while in placement	N/A		
MDT was pre-scheduled; meeting conducted with stakeholders invited and/or present	N/A		
Attorney Contact			
Resident spoke with attorney prior to hearing	N/A		
Resident has had contact with attorney since placement (detention, commitment, residential)	N/A		

Additional Comments

The Commission Travels Forward.....

The Juvenile Justice Commission is committed to those children and teenagers in trouble with the law – a typically misunderstood population of young people who often come from chaotic family situations and have a substance use history and/or are struggling with mental health symptoms. The Commission embarked on this journey in 2011, not completely sure of its destination or impact. More than four years later, we continue to travel toward a goal of community- based, evidence- based, assessment driven interventions for juvenile offenders. We recognize the future holds challenges which must be addressed. West Virginia, in its renewed commitment to juvenile justice, has strengthened some components and has identified some areas of that system that need immediate attention. For example, the Commission recognizes the importance and need for community based interventions, day report centers, and mental health services – all should be available and accessible in the local community.

As we travel forward, we will continue to encourage a multisystem collaboration between all branches of government and all stakeholders while promoting youth and family rehabilitation and success.

