

OVERSIGHT OF REHABILITATION AND TREATMENT IN  
SECURE CARE FACILITIES

OFFICE OF JUVENILE JUSTICE



PERFORMANCE AUDIT SERVICES  
ISSUED JUNE 13, 2018

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LOUISIANA LEGISLATIVE AUDITOR  
DARYL G. PURPERA, CPA, CFE

June 13, 2018

The Honorable John A. Alario, Jr.,  
President of the Senate  
The Honorable Taylor F. Barras  
Speaker of the House of Representatives

Dear Senator Alario and Representative Barras:

This report provides the results of our evaluation of the Office of Juvenile Justice's (OJJ) oversight of rehabilitation and treatment in secure care facilities.

The report contains our findings, conclusions, and recommendations. I hope this report will benefit you in your legislative decision-making process.

We would like to express our appreciation to the management and staff of OJJ and other stakeholders interviewed for their assistance during this audit.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Thomas H. Cole". The signature is written in a cursive style.

Thomas H. Cole, CPA  
First Assistant Legislative Auditor

THC/aa

OJJ REHABILITATION OVERSIGHT



# Louisiana Legislative Auditor

Daryl G. Purpera, CPA, CFE



## Oversight of Rehabilitation and Treatment in Secure Care Facilities Office of Juvenile Justice

June 2018

Audit Control # 40170007

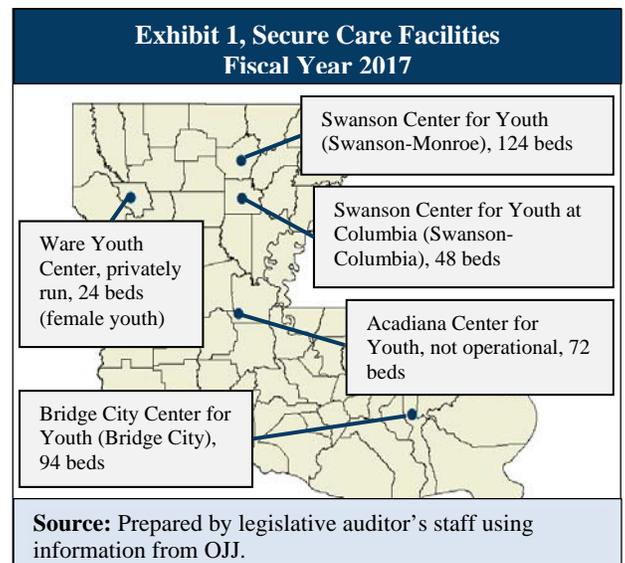
### Introduction

We evaluated the Office of Juvenile Justice’s (OJJ) oversight of rehabilitation and treatment in secure care facilities. OJJ is responsible for the supervision and custody of youth committed to its custody by a judge. Secure care facilities house youth with the most severe level of need and those who pose a risk to public safety. This is our second of two audits of OJJ. Our first audit evaluated OJJ’s oversight of the safety of staff and youth in Louisiana’s four secure care facilities.<sup>1</sup> The purpose of both reports is to provide the Task Force on Secure Care Standards and Auditing (Task Force), created by Senate Concurrent Resolution 38 of the 2017 Legislative Session, with information to use when developing standards and procedures for the operation of secure care facilities in Louisiana. The Task Force’s recommendations will include standards on the safety of staff and youth in secure care facilities, treatment plans, and rehabilitative programs.

OJJ’s mission is to protect the public by providing safe and effective individualized services to youth who will become productive, law-abiding citizens. Effective treatment programs are important because youth in OJJ’s custody will be released back into the public by the time they are 21 years of age. From fiscal years 2013 to 2017, 1,417 youth were released back in to the community from OJJ custody. According to Louisiana Revised Statute (R.S.)

15:906, the commitment of youth to OJJ’s care is “not punitive nor in anywise to be construed as a penal sentence, but a step in the total treatment process toward rehabilitation of the juvenile.” On average, approximately 276<sup>2</sup> youth are housed in four secure care facilities on a daily basis; three facilities for males operated by OJJ and one privately-operated facility for females. Exhibit 1 shows the location of each secure care facility.

Youth in secure care receive rehabilitation services from the time they are placed in OJJ custody until after they are released from secure care. OJJ provides the following types of services and oversight activities for the rehabilitation of youth:



<sup>1</sup> [Oversight of Safety in Secure Care Facilities, June 2018](#)

<sup>2</sup> 276 is the average daily census for fiscal year 2017 across all four facilities.

- **Ongoing Assessments** – In order to be placed in the most appropriate setting, OJJ conducts an initial risk assessment, in conjunction with a disposition matrix, to identify the best placement for youth based on risk and needs. The risk assessment also identifies the youths’ rehabilitation needs. Youth are reassessed every six months. Once youth are placed in secure care, they receive medical and mental health screenings and a comprehensive mental health assessment by a licensed psychologist.
- **Treatment and Rehabilitation Programs** (“treatment programs”) – Using the results from the risk assessment, staff develop an individualized intervention plan for each youth that outlines the areas needing treatment and rehabilitation. This plan is updated quarterly. Youth live in dorms and participate in group and one-on-one counseling. Some dorms offer specialized treatment, such as sex offender treatment, residential substance abuse treatment, or mental health treatment. Educational programs include academic remediation for youth who are behind academically, GED or the high school equivalency testing, and post-secondary courses.
- **Preparation for Reentry into the Community** – Upon arrival to secure care, staff begins to develop an on-going reentry plan to help prepare youth for successful return to the community. OJJ also provides vocational programs, such as culinary arts, welding, or carpentry, at secure care facilities to help the youth become productive, law-abiding citizens once they reenter society. Prior to release, OJJ staff finalize the youth’s reentry plan, which includes links to services in the community and education or employment contacts.

In addition, in February 2017 OJJ began participating in Performance-based Standards (PbS), a data-driven improvement model that sets national standards and compares juvenile justice agency performance to that of other states. Also, OJJ conducts audits of specialized treatment programs using the Correctional Program Checklist (CPC) tool to evaluate program effectiveness, which is a best practice. Because the Louisiana Department of Education (LDE) is responsible for monitoring educational services, those services were not included within the scope of this audit. The objective of this performance audit was:

**To evaluate OJJ’s oversight of rehabilitation and treatment in secure care facilities.**

Overall, we found that while OJJ has implemented a disposition matrix that determines which youth should be placed in secure care and reduced recidivism rates, it needs to complete risk assessments and treatment plans in a more timely manner, collect more information to evaluate the effectiveness of treatment programs, and improve the overall quality of treatment programs. The issues we identified are discussed in detail throughout the remainder of the report. Appendix A contains OJJ’s response to this report, and Appendix B details our scope and methodology. Appendix C includes the most serious current offense as for youth in secure care, and Appendix D includes statistics on youth returns to custody.

## Objective: To evaluate OJJ's oversight of rehabilitation and treatment in secure care facilities.

We found that while OJJ has implemented a disposition matrix that determines which youth should be placed in secure care and reduced recidivism rates, it needs to complete risk assessments and treatment plans in a more timely manner, collect more information to evaluate the effectiveness of treatment programs, and improve the overall quality of treatment programs.

Specifically we found:

- **Since OJJ started using a disposition matrix in fiscal year 2016, the number of non-violent youth placed directly into secure care has decreased by 71%. However, in fiscal year 2017, OJJ placed 21% (7 of 33) of youth in secure care based on past violent offenses instead of their current offense, as policy dictates.** OJJ should clarify which offenses staff should use to make placement decisions or use the override process for instances in which staff determines that past offenses are more appropriate to use.
- **Between fiscal years 2013 and 2017, OJJ did not always complete required risk assessments and intervention plans for OJJ youth within the required timeframes.** These assessments and plans are important factors in determining what services youth need.
- **OJJ did not always complete mental health assessments on youth in a timely manner, and OJJ's mental health assessment timeframes are not consistent with Pbs.** Timely mental health assessments are important because OJJ estimates that 44% of youth in secure care have a serious mental illness.
- **OJJ does not ensure that the 65% of youth placed in general population dorms are engaged in individualized, meaningful treatment programs.** As a result, youth may not be effectively rehabilitated before reentering the community.
- **OJJ does not consistently document group therapy sessions and does not collect data on who completes treatment programs.** As a result, OJJ's ability to accurately determine which programs are the most effective at treating youth is limited.
- **Although there has been an improvement in one-year recidivism rates, better tracking of program outcomes could help OJJ determine what programs have the most impact on recidivism rates.** Specifically, one-year recidivism rates have decreased by 20.6%, from 22.3% in fiscal year 2014 to 17.7% in fiscal year 2016.

- **OJJ does not ensure that youth receive reentry planning designed to help them transition back into the community once released from secure care.** In addition, OJJ's quality assurance process does not evaluate the quality of reentry plans.
- **Bridge City and Swanson-Monroe are old facilities, costly to maintain, and not conducive to OJJ's therapeutic model. While OJJ has a new 72-bed secure care facility built according to a therapeutic model, it has not become operational due to a lack of funding.** If this facility is not opened by fiscal year 2022, OJJ will have spent at least \$918,000 since its completion to maintain an empty building.

These findings are explained in more detail on the following pages.

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**Since OJJ started using a disposition matrix in fiscal year 2016, the number of non-violent youth placed directly into secure care has decreased by 71%. However, in fiscal year 2017, OJJ placed 21% (7 of 33) of youth in secure care based on past violent offenses instead of their current offense, as policy dictates.<sup>3</sup>**

Youth assigned to OJJ custody are required by law<sup>4</sup> to be placed in the least restrictive environment that is consistent with the circumstances of the youth's offense and the best interest of society. OJJ currently uses a disposition matrix to help determine this placement. A youth can be placed in secure care, non-secure care such as a group home, or directly on probation. The disposition matrix,<sup>5</sup> implemented at the end of fiscal year 2016, is intended to identify the least restrictive placement needed for youth to receive the appropriate rehabilitation services. This placement is based on the severity of the youth's crime(s) and the youth's risk level according to the Structured Assessment of Violent Risk in Youth (SAVRY). The SAVRY is a risk assessment tool that evaluates the type of treatment programs the youth needs to receive. Exhibit 2 shows the disposition matrix used by OJJ.

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<sup>3</sup> These analyses include female youth housed at the Ware Youth Center.

<sup>4</sup> LSA - Ch. C. Art. 901 (B)

<sup>5</sup> Sex offenders and youth with mandatory minimum sentences (also known as "Vitter" youth) are not placed using the disposition matrix.

<b>Exhibit 2</b>			
<b>Secure Care Eligibility Based on Disposition Matrix</b>			
<b>Most Serious Offense</b>	<b>SAVRY Risk Rating</b>		
	<b>Low</b>	<b>Moderate</b>	<b>High</b>
<b>Minor</b> <i>(Misdemeanor offenses)</i>	Not Eligible	Not Eligible	Not Eligible
<b>Moderate</b> <i>(Violent misdemeanors, Non-violent felonies)</i>	Not Eligible	Not Eligible	<b>Eligible After Two or More Failed Non-Secure Placements Only</b>
<b>Major</b> <i>(Violent felonies, repeated/multiple violent misdemeanors)</i>	Not Eligible	Not Eligible	<b>Eligible</b>
<b>Violent</b> <i>(Felonies statutorily defined as "Crimes of Violence")</i>	Not Eligible	Not Eligible	<b>Eligible</b>

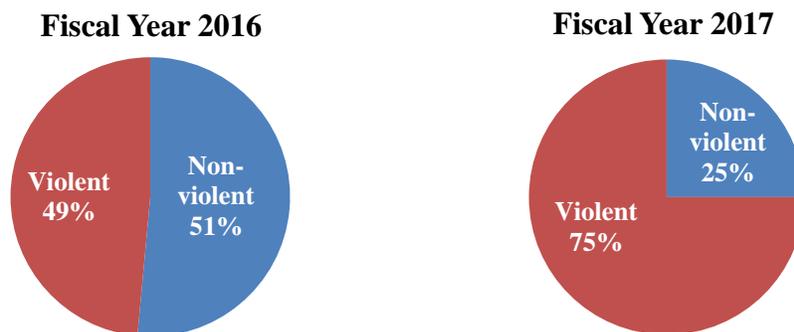
**Source:** Prepared by legislative auditor's staff using OJJ policy.

According to OJJ policy, secure care is “reserved for the highest need, violent youth” and “is not to be used as consequence for lower level offenders.” The guidelines for using the disposition matrix further state that youth identified as low-risk for re-offending should not be recommended for secure care placement, as research shows that placing such youth in the same environment as high-risk youth can actually increase the criminality of low-risk youth.

Since the implementation of the disposition matrix at the end of fiscal year 2016, the number of non-violent youth placed directly into secure care fell 71.4%, from 70 youth in fiscal year 2016 to 20 youth in fiscal year 2017.<sup>6</sup> In addition, the number of youth overall, both violent and non-violent, placed directly into secure care decreased 41.2%, from 136 youth to 80 during this same time period. In the year prior to the adoption of the disposition matrix, non-violent youth made up slightly more than half of all youth immediately placed in secure care, and in the year after, they accounted for just a little more than a quarter. Exhibit 3 shows the violent and non-violent percentages for youth placed directly into secure care for fiscal years 2016 and 2017. Appendix C lists the most serious offenses for youth in secure care for fiscal year 2013 and 2017.

<sup>6</sup> In fiscal year 2016, 2,787 youth entered OJJ custody or supervision, and in fiscal year 2017, 2,671 entered OJJ custody or supervision. As a result, the total number of OJJ youth fell by 4.29% from fiscal year 2016 to 2017, but the number of non-violent youth placed in secure care fell by 71.49%.

**Exhibit 3**  
**Violent and Non-violent Youth Placed Directly into Secure Care**



Source: Prepared by legislative auditor's staff using data from OJJ.

**OJJ placed 21.1% (7 of 33<sup>7</sup>) of youth in secure care based on past violent offenses instead of their current offense, as policy dictates.** If staff makes a placement recommendation that deviates from the disposition matrix, an override request must be made and approved by the regional director and the Deputy Secretary. For example, the needs of the youth (e.g., significant mental health needs, etc.) may be greater than what OJJ is able to provide at any other level of care. We found that 7 (21.2%) of the 33 youth OJJ placed directly in secure care during fiscal year 2017 did not appear to meet the department's criteria for secure care placement. While OJJ's staff may have made the appropriate decision to place the youth in secure care, they did not have an approved override, which provides an extra level of review so that management can ensure that it is the right decision.

In addition, OJJ policy states that staff should use the current offense to score the matrix; however, in practice, staff may use a past offense to score the matrix if they believe it is more relevant to the youth's current circumstances than the current offense. For example, one youth was placed in secure care based on a past offense of aggravated battery, which is a violent felony, because staff determined it to be the most relevant offense. However, his current offense was simple burglary, which is a non-violent offense. While using past offenses may be appropriate, OJJ should clarify which offenses staff should use to make placement decisions or when to use overrides for these instances.

**Recommendation 1:** OJJ should clarify its policy regarding the disposition matrix and overrides to ensure that staff applies the criteria consistently to youth cases.

**Summary of Management's Response:** OJJ agrees with this recommendation and states that it sees the implementation of the disposition matrix as a success. The placement of youth involves more than just the youth's current offense and OJJ agrees that policy should meet practice. The OJJ Program Manager has met with the Regional

<sup>7</sup> These numbers do not include youth adjudicated to mandatory minimums (also known as "Vitter" youth), as they are always placed in secure care, or sex offenders who are placed using the psychosexual evaluation rather than the disposition matrix.

Directors and suggested changes are being drafted for review/approval. See Appendix A for OJJ's full response.

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**Between fiscal years 2013 and 2017, OJJ did not always complete required risk assessments and intervention plans for OJJ youth within the required timeframes. These assessments and plans are important factors in determining what services youth need.**

As discussed earlier, OJJ uses the SAVRY, an evidence-based assessment tool, to evaluate a youth's rehabilitation needs and risk of future delinquency. SAVRY uses information about each youth's historical, individual, and social risk factors to reach an overall conclusion about whether the youth has a low, moderate, or high risk of reoffending. Staff then use the risk assessment to identify the youth's needs and develop the individual intervention plan which outlines what services are needed for rehabilitation.

**OJJ did not complete 29.7% (217 of 730) of initial risk assessments<sup>8</sup> for youth recommended to secure care within five business days, as required by OJJ policy.** Timely initial risk assessments are important because they help identify each youth's individual needs and help determine their placement recommendations and treatment goals. Staff then develops an individual intervention plan based on the risks and needs identified in the SAVRY assessment, outlining specific goals for each need area. These plans are important because they link youth needs to the goals and programs that will assist in their rehabilitation. Exhibit 4 shows how late OJJ staff completed these assessments during fiscal years 2013 through 2017.

<b>Exhibit 4 Late Initial Risk Assessments Fiscal Years 2013 through 2017</b>		
<b>Timeliness</b>	<b>Number</b>	<b>Percent</b>
Less than a week late	162	74.7%
Less than a month late	38	17.5%
More than a month late	17	7.8%
<b>Total</b>	<b>217</b>	<b>100.0%</b>
<b>Source:</b> Prepared by legislative auditor's staff using information provided by OJJ.		

**OJJ did not develop 42.3% (568 of 1,342) of initial intervention plans within two days and did not complete 44.4% (1,997 of 4,494) of intervention plan updates within 90 days, as required by OJJ policy.** As part of the process of updating the intervention plans, a multi-disciplinary team comprised of clinical staff, dorm leaders, and family members hold a meeting to discuss the youth's progress and needs. Updating the individual intervention plans is

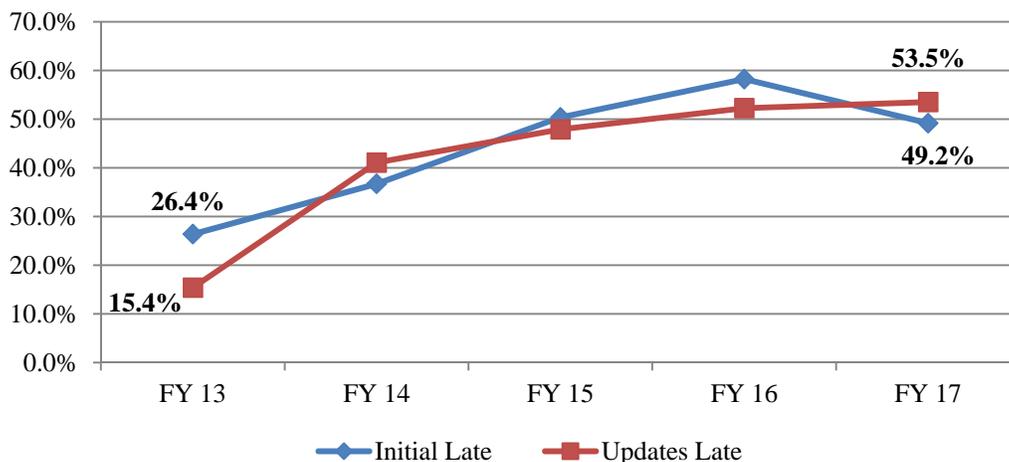
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<sup>8</sup> This analysis includes all youth placed directly into secure care after disposition, including female youth housed at the Ware Youth Center.

important for OJJ to continue to provide the most appropriate secure care facility assignment and updated program involvement for each youth.

Developing and updating intervention plans in a timely manner is also important to manage a youth's progress and potentially allow the youth to step down to a less restrictive setting, such as a group home or probation. Exhibit 5 shows the percentage of initial intervention plans and intervention plan updates that were completed late. As shown in the exhibit, the percentage of late intervention plans has increased since fiscal year 2013.

**Exhibit 5**  
**Percent of Late Intervention Plans**  
**Fiscal Years 2013 - 2017**



**Source:** Prepared by legislative auditor's staff using data from OJJ

**Recommendation 2:** OJJ should ensure that staff complete risk assessments and intervention plans in a timely manner as required in policy.

**Summary of Management's Response:** OJJ agrees with this recommendation and states that regular training will continue to be provided to staff emphasizing the importance of the timely completion of all assessments. The timeframe in which the initial IIP is to be completed was changed from 48 hours to 7 days and approved on November 3, 2017. This change is in line with the initial IIP Staffing which is to be held within seven days of the youth's arrival at a secure care facility as outlined in policy. See Appendix A for OJJ's full response.

**OJJ did not always complete mental health assessments on youth in a timely manner, and OJJ’s mental health assessment timeframes are not consistent with PbS. Timely mental health assessments are important because OJJ estimates that 44% of youth in secure care have a serious mental illness.**

National research states that approximately 40 to 80 percent of incarcerated juveniles have at least one diagnosable mental health disorder,<sup>9</sup> and according to OJJ approximately 44% of youth in OJJ secure care have a serious mental illness. Youth receive a brief mental health screening during intake and then receive a comprehensive mental health assessment by a qualified mental health professional.<sup>10</sup> Quality mental health assessments are important to ensure that youth receive appropriate mental health treatment if needed and are placed in relevant programs.

**In 16 (16%) of the 100 case files we reviewed,<sup>11</sup> OJJ did not have a comprehensive mental health assessment completed within 30 days, and 10 (10%) did not have an initial mental health screening on the day of intake, as required by OJJ policy.** All youth should have an initial mental health screening on the day they arrive at the facility. This assists OJJ in placing youth in the appropriate dorm and identifying immediate mental health needs. In addition, all youth in secure care facilities should receive a comprehensive mental health assessment, conducted by a psychologist, within 30 days of their admission to secure care. These mental health assessments include results from nationally recognized standardized assessment tools, such as the MAYSI-2,<sup>12</sup> intelligence testing, and substance abuse assessments.<sup>13</sup> Based on the results, youth may be referred to psychiatry or participate in mental health group therapy, and the comprehensive mental health assessment is used to create youths’ individual intervention plans. Exhibit 6 shows the results of our file review.

<b>Exhibit 6</b>				
<b>Untimely Mental Health Assessments in 100 Youth Medical Files</b>				
<b>Fiscal Years 2013 through 2017</b>				
<b>Assessment Type</b>	<b>Number Late</b>	<b>Average Days Late</b>	<b>Highest Number of Days Late</b>	<b>OJJ Policy</b>
Initial Screening	10	1	3	Day of intake
Comprehensive Mental Health Assessment	16	20	82	30 days
<b>Source:</b> Prepared by legislative auditor’s staff using medical data provided by OJJ’s contractor.				

<sup>9</sup> *Mental Illness and Juvenile Offenders*, International Journal of Environmental Research and Public Health, 2016

<sup>10</sup> OJJ contracts with Correct Care Solutions to provide medical and mental health services at each secure care facility.

<sup>11</sup> We conducted a file review of a targeted selection of 100 youth. See Appendix B for the methodology used to pull the selection.

<sup>12</sup> The Massachusetts Youth Screening Instrument (MAYSI-2) is the most widely used mental health screening tool in juvenile justice programs.

<sup>13</sup> Psychological tests include the Wechsler Abbreviated Scale of Intelligence-II (WASI-II), the Trauma System Checklist for Children (TSCC), and the Substance Abuse Subtle Screening Inventory-AS (SASSI A2).

**We found that OJJ policy for mental health assessments is not consistent with PbS.** As summarized in Exhibit 7, PbS states that youth should have an initial mental health screening within one hour of arriving to a facility, and each youth should have a comprehensive mental health assessment within seven days of admission unless an assessment has been completed within six months prior to admission. These assessments should include the use of validated instruments, a clinical interview, and collateral contacts to assist with treatment and rehabilitation planning.

Exhibit 7 Difference Between OJJ's Policy and PbS		
Assessment Type	OJJ Policy	PbS
Initial Screening	Day of intake	Within 1 hour of intake
Comprehensive Mental Health Assessment	30 days	7 days
<b>Source:</b> Prepared by legislative auditor's staff using information from OJJ and PbS.		

According to OJJ, it cannot meet the seven-day timeframe because a psychologist is only at the facilities once a week. In addition, in February 2017, OJJ started collecting information to determine if youth receive an initial mental health assessment within one hour of arrival. In October 2017, the data showed that 32.4% of youth at Bridge City had an assessment within one hour, compared to the national average of 89.4%.

**Recommendation 3:** OJJ should consider changing its mental health screening and assessment policy to align with PbS.

**Summary of Management's Response:** OJJ agrees with this recommendation and states that its policy is currently being reviewed/updated to align timeframes for screening and assessment with PbS. The benefit of PbS is that it creates a process to identify areas in need of improvement and slowly, over time, revise policies and practices to coincide with PbS best practices. See Appendix A for OJJ's full response.

**Recommendation 4:** OJJ should consider increasing the number of days psychologists are at the secure care facilities.

**Summary of Management's Response:** OJJ agrees with this recommendation and states that the required hours for medical personnel are outlined in the current contract with Correct Care Solutions. When the contract approaches renewal, staff hours will be re-negotiated. See Appendix A for OJJ's full response.

**OJJ does not ensure that the 65% of youth placed in general population dorms are engaged in individualized, meaningful treatment programs. As a result, youth may not be effectively rehabilitated before reentering the community.**

While in secure care facilities, youth are housed in a dorm with up to 12 youth who do everything together, including eating, attending school, and participating in group therapy. Some dorms are specialized and provide targeted treatment for sex offenders or other conditions such as substance abuse or mental health illnesses. If youth are not placed in one of these specialized dorms, they are placed in a general population dorm. As of August 2017, 167 (65%) of 257 youth housed in secure care were in a general population dorm, while 90 (35%) were in a specialized dorm. Exhibit 8 shows the number of youth in specialized and general population dorms by facility.

Exhibit 8 Number of Youth in Specialized and General Population Dorms As of August 29, 2017						
Facility	Specialized Programs	Specialized Dorm	Percent Specialized	General Population	Percent General	Total
Bridge City*	Sex Offender	32	36.4%	56	63.6%	88
Swanson-Monroe	Residential Substance Abuse Mental Health Transitional Mental Health	45	37.5%	75	62.5%	120
Swanson-Columbia*	Fast Track	13	26.5%	36	73.5%	49
<b>Total</b>		<b>90</b>	<b>35.0%</b>	<b>167</b>	<b>65.0%</b>	<b>257</b>
*Youth identified as needing substance abuse may also receive clinic-based substance abuse treatment at these facilities. Youth needing residential-based substance abuse treatment are housed at Swanson-Monroe. <b>Source:</b> Prepared by legislative auditor's staff using data from OJJ.						

**OJJ does not have a formalized, evidence-based curriculum and does not offer an array of evidence-based programs for general population dorms.** Currently, evidence-based programs are only consistently provided in the specialized dorms. OJJ policy states that treatment services that are provided to moderate and high-risk youth should be evidence-based, individualized, and focused on reducing criminogenic risks and needs. Since youth in secure care were identified as the highest-risk youth, they should all receive individualized, evidence-based services, not just the youth in the specialized dorms. As approximately 65% of youth in secure care are housed in general population dorms, it is important that these dorms also consistently provide evidence-based programs.

“Programs and services are considered **evidence based** when they have demonstrated effectiveness through scientific research and evaluation. Both research and field experience show that implementing evidence-based programs and services with fidelity correlates to reduced recidivism and improved outcomes for youth.”

**Source:** Justice Center, The Council of State Governments

National best practices<sup>14</sup> recommend that juvenile justice agencies fund services shown to reduce recidivism. Best practices<sup>15</sup> also state that youth should participate in life skills programs that use an established curriculum and that staff implement the curriculum consistently. While OJJ provides group therapy sessions to youth in general population dorms on topics such as life skills, anger management, and victim awareness, there is no standard structure for staff to follow or a requirement that services be evidence-based. OJJ quality assurance audits found that some staff were not prepared for leading a group session, chose the topic once the group started, and did not demonstrate knowledge about the subject matter. In addition, some topics appeared unrelated to treatment, such as taking the youth to the barbershop or watching the NBA playoffs. According to OJJ, some staff are trained in delivering evidence-based programs, such as Thinking for a Change, and may incorporate it into their group sessions; however, OJJ does not ensure that all staff receive formal training in providing evidence-based services.

According to OJJ, it is working towards obtaining more curriculum materials and training in order to deliver more evidence-based programs. Other states, such as Oregon and Tennessee, focus most of their treatment on evidence-based programs. In Oregon and Tennessee, state law requires that a percentage of juvenile justice funding be spent on evidence-based programs. Louisiana law does not require that OJJ use evidence-based programs.

**In addition, OJJ audits do not evaluate the effectiveness of general population dorms, which house the majority of youth.** OJJ conducts Correctional Program Checklist (CPC) audits on specialized treatment programs; these audits are evidence-based assessments developed to evaluate correctional intervention programs and ascertain how closely correctional programs meet known principles of effective intervention.<sup>16</sup> However, OJJ does not audit the effectiveness of the services that youth in general population dorms do receive.

**Recommendation 5:** OJJ should expand evidence-based programs for youth in general population dorms and consider developing a base treatment curriculum that utilizes evidence-based programs for general population dorms.

**Summary of Management's Response:** OJJ agrees with this recommendation and states that the current evidence based programs being utilized with youth who are assigned to general population dormitories are Thinking for a Change, Positive Adolescent Choices Training, and Cognitive-Behavioral Interventions. These three treatment modalities have been adopted for use in all OJJ secure facilities. In addition, there is a plan in place that outlines the development of OJJ staff as trainers to ensure consistent and continuous training opportunities for staff and as part of preservice training. See Appendix A for OJJ's full response.

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<sup>14</sup> The Council of State Governments, *Core Principles for Reducing Recidivism and Improving Other Outcomes for Youth in the Juvenile Justice System*

<sup>15</sup> The National Institute of Corrections, *Desktop Guide to Quality Practice for Working with Youth in Confinement*

<sup>16</sup> The CPC tool was developed and validated by the University of Cincinnati. The CPC evaluates the capacity of the facility to deliver evidence-based services and the whether the content meets the principles of risk, need, responsivity, and treatment.

**Recommendation 6:** As OJJ starts implementing more evidence-based programs, it should conduct CPC audits on general population dorms to evaluate the effectiveness of its interventions.

**Summary of Management’s Response:** OJJ agrees with this recommendation and states that CQIS has the qualified, trained staff ready and available to conduct the evaluations when the time comes. This matter has been discussed in staff meetings and a schedule will be established to accomplish the task, once programs are fully implemented. See Appendix A for OJJ’s full response.

**Matter for Legislative Consideration:** The legislature may wish to consider requiring OJJ to provide evidence-based programs to youth in secure care.

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### **OJJ does not consistently document group therapy sessions and does not collect data on who completes treatment programs.**

**Staff do not consistently document group therapy sessions for all dorms, which prevents OJJ from monitoring what services youth are receiving.** OJJ cannot accurately determine if youth are consistently receiving group therapy and the content of each session. OJJ policy requires staff to complete forms indicating when group therapy sessions take place, what topics were discussed, how many sessions occurred, and which youth participated in the sessions. OJJ policy states that youth should receive seven group therapy sessions per week, thus youth should be receiving one group session per day. However, we analyzed group therapy data from these forms and found that, on average, youth did not receive a group therapy session on 44% of the days they spent in secure care. This means that youth may only be receiving half of the treatment that they should. Multiple quality assurance audits also found that staff was not consistently completing these forms, so OJJ cannot determine the actual number of youth participating in group therapy sessions.

OJJ also does not collect information on the Louisiana Model for Secure Care (LAMOD) youth stages in a way that can be analyzed to determine the effectiveness of the treatment philosophy. LAMOD is a youth-centered treatment philosophy based on Missouri’s model<sup>17</sup> where staff provides a learning environment for the youth to grow and develop. Research has shown that therapeutic models have better outcomes than control-oriented programs (such as boot camps or correctional models). The LAMOD process has four stages that a youth can advance through while in secure care. These stages include: (1) Orientation—Learning and Safety, (2) Emerging—Self Awareness, (3) Adaptation—Applying Skills, and (4) Transformation—Role Model and Leadership. Each stage includes positive rewards and incentives for good behavior, such as magazines, off-campus trips, personal radios, additional snacks, or escorted absences. Best practices suggest that swift and certain rewards and

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<sup>17</sup> The Missouri Model provides treatment in a therapeutic setting in small facilities across the state, and is recognized nationally as a best practice.

consequences are effective at helping youth improve their behavior.<sup>18</sup> Collecting and analyzing information on youth stages could help OJJ determine if the LAMOD process is working to produce positive outcomes or whether the process needs to be adjusted. Multiple stakeholders and OJJ staff we spoke with questioned whether LAMOD was being implemented effectively in secure care facilities.

**In addition, OJJ management does not collect program participation and completion data for youth in specialized treatment programs or vocational programs, which limits it from determining the effectiveness of these programs.** Currently, OJJ can only determine which specialized treatment programs a youth participated in by the dorm each youth is assigned to, and it does not collect data on which youth completed what vocational programs, such as culinary arts, carpentry, welding, and horticulture. OJJ's data system does not currently include an indicator for program participation. As a result, OJJ's ability to accurately determine which programs are the most effective at treating youth is limited.

**Recommendation 7:** OJJ should begin collecting program start dates and program completion dates for specialized treatment and vocational programs as a tool to better monitor outcomes and effectiveness. This could include determining if it can create fields in its software program to collect participation and completion information.

**Summary of Management's Response:** OJJ agrees with this recommendation and states that it is reviewing its electronic system to identify the most effective way of tracking outcomes of secure programming. OJJ currently contracts with the Office of Technology Services (OTS) for support of its current IT system. OTS is currently involved in ongoing improvement measures; however, resources are limited. OJJ will continue to meet with OTS to improve the system and capture this information. See Appendix A for OJJ's full response.

**Recommendation 8:** OJJ should ensure that staff consistently and thoroughly document group therapy sessions.

**Summary of Management's Response:** OJJ agrees with this recommendation and states that documentation of group therapy sessions is monitored by the case manager's direct supervisor, Facility Treatment Director, and Deputy Director. These individuals will be held accountable to ensure documentation takes place. Quarterly Treatment Audits are conducted to closely monitor compliance with policy requirements, to include this documentation, as well as identify and provide additional staff training as needed. See Appendix A for OJJ's full response.

**Recommendation 9:** Management should monitor the content of group therapy sessions.

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<sup>18</sup> National Institute for Corrections, *Desktop Guide to Quality Practice for Working with Youth in Confinement*

**Summary of Management’s Response:** OJJ agrees with this recommendation and states that the Supervisor, Facility Treatment Director, and Deputy Director are responsible for monthly observations of group therapy. The reports are provided to the Director of Treatment and Rehabilitation in Central Office for review and recommendations when needed. Group therapy is also monitored as part of CQIS audits. The current procedure is being reviewed to assess the effectiveness of current protocol and will be revised to ensure the most effective monitoring. See Appendix A for OJJ’s full response.

**Recommendation 10:** OJJ should begin collecting youth stages and dorm phases to determine whether positive reinforcements are occurring and effective.

**Summary of Management’s Response:** OJJ agrees with this recommendation and states that its LaMod Coordinator is working with the facility Group Leaders on documentation relative to stages, etc. The current forms used by Social Services for weekly documentation have been reviewed to determine the best method of collecting information regarding youth stages and dorm phases. OTS is being consulted to begin facilitating the changes. See Appendix A for OJJ’s full response.

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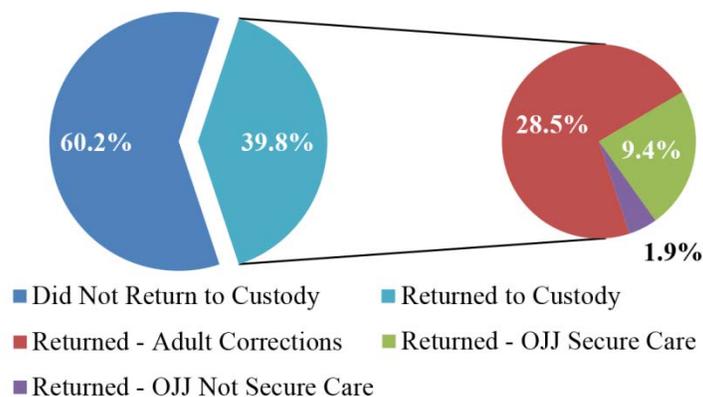
**Although there has been an improvement in one-year recidivism rates, better tracking of program outcomes could help OJJ determine what programs have the most impact on recidivism rates. One-year recidivism rates have decreased by 20.6%, from 22.3% in fiscal year 2014 to 17.7% in fiscal year 2016.**

As recidivism rates appear to be improving, collecting participation and completion information by treatment program – as discussed in the previous finding – could help OJJ identify what practices or programs are having the greatest impact on recidivism rates. Exhibit 9 shows recidivism rates for fiscal years 2014 through 2016.

<b>Exhibit 9</b>			
<b>Secure Care Recidivism Rates Calculated by OJJ</b>			
<b>Fiscal Years 2014 to 2016</b>			
<b>Fiscal Years</b>	<b>One-year Rate</b>	<b>Two-year Rate</b>	<b>Three-year Rate</b>
FY 2014	22.3%	35.9%	42.0%
FY 2015	19.4%	30.3%	N/A
FY 2016	17.7%	N/A	N/A
<b>Source:</b> Prepared by legislative auditor’s staff using information from OJJ’s recidivism calculations.			

In addition, of the 1,486<sup>19</sup> youth that were released from secure care between fiscal years 2013 and 2017, 423 (28.5%) entered the custody of adult corrections.<sup>20</sup> Exhibit 10 shows the outcomes for youth released from OJJ custody who were housed in secure care at some point between fiscal years 2013 to 2017. See Appendix D for additional statistics on returns to custody.

**Exhibit 10**  
**Secure Care Returns to Custody**  
**Fiscal Years 2013 to 2017 Releases**



**While OJJ calculates recidivism rates for secure care releases, it does not regularly calculate and compare recidivism by program.** The Council of State Governments Justice Center recommends that juvenile justice agencies analyze recidivism data for participation in different service programs.<sup>21</sup> Currently, OJJ does not routinely calculate recidivism rate by program. If OJJ began calculating recidivism by program, it could compare recidivism between specialized and general population dorms to determine if the specialized programs are resulting in better outcomes for youth. While there are many factors that affect recidivism rates, analyzing recidivism rates by program could help OJJ determine overall effectiveness of its programs.

**Because OJJ does not collect participation or completion data for vocational programs, it cannot calculate recidivism rates by youth who participated in particular programs.** Oregon found that vocational training has been its most effective program, reducing recidivism by approximately 19%. While OJJ has increased the number of youth participating in vocational programs by 455%, from 40 youth in fiscal year 2013 to 222 youth in fiscal year 2017, it does not know if these programs are effective. Calculating recidivism rates for vocational programs could help OJJ determine which programs could be expanded or need more resources.

<sup>19</sup> This number includes youth who entered and were released from OJJ custody multiple times. It represents 1,417 unique youth.

<sup>20</sup> Our analysis looked only at felony convictions in the adult correctional system. This analysis does not include misdemeanor convictions.

<sup>21</sup> *Measuring and Using Juvenile Recidivism Data to Inform Policy, Practice, and Resource Allocation.*

Since OJJ cannot currently determine the effectiveness of vocational programs, we compared youth released from OJJ secure care with data from the Louisiana Workforce Commission (LWC) to determine whether youth obtained jobs in the vocational programs offered by OJJ. We found that while at least 682 (48.1%) of 1,417 youth got a job at some point after leaving a secure care facility, most jobs do not appear to correspond to the vocational programs offered in OJJ facilities. The most common jobs youth obtained were in the food industry. OJJ's culinary program is a popular program with youth, often having a waiting list, and is its most successful program according to OJJ. LWC's data showed that fewer youth appeared to find jobs in areas such as welding, carpentry, or computer tech, so OJJ could use this information to adjust the programs it offers in each facility and potentially expand its culinary program. OJJ could also use this information to consider improving its community relationships to help youth transition into the other vocational areas such as welding that are less common after release. Exhibit 11 shows the top 10 numbers of jobs in each company category type. As Exhibit 11 shows, most youth obtain a job in the fast food and retail industries; however, OJJ does not offer general programs in these areas.

<b>Exhibit 11</b>			
<b>Top 10 Jobs by Company Category</b>			
<b>Youth Released from Secure Care between FY 2013 and FY 2017</b>			
<b>Company Type</b>	<b>Potential Related Vocational Program</b>	<b>Number of Jobs</b>	<b>Percent of Jobs</b>
Fast Food	None	514	28.7%
Food Industry (non-fast food)	Culinary Arts	280	15.7%
Retail	None	224	12.5%
Staffing Agency	Unknown	184	10.3%
Grocery Store	None	88	4.9%
Construction	Carpentry	58	3.2%
Government/Nonprofit	None	59	3.3%
Manufacturing/Plant/Skilled	Welding	64	3.6%
Auto/Car Wash	Small Engine Repair	42	2.3%
Agriculture	Horticulture	41	2.3%
<b>Source:</b> Prepared by legislative auditor's staff using data from OJJ and Louisiana Workforce Commission.			

**Recommendation 11:** OJJ should begin calculating recidivism rates by program.

**Summary of Management's Response:** OJJ agrees with this recommendation and states that after its electronic system is modified to capture program placement and completion, CQIS will incorporate the calculation of recidivism rates by program into its data warehouse. See Appendix A for OJJ's full response.

**Recommendation 12:** OJJ should strengthen existing vocational programs and work towards developing additional vocational opportunities, including programs and community relationship to assist youth in obtaining jobs.

**Summary of Management's Response:** OJJ agrees with this recommendation and states that it anticipates strengthening and adding vocational opportunities through the improvement and expansion of the Jobs for America's Graduates (JAG) program. Additionally, OJJ will continue to ask for more funding to increase vocational programs and job readiness. See Appendix A for OJJ's full response.

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**OJJ does not ensure that youth receive reentry planning designed to help them transition back into the community once released from secure care. In addition, OJJ's quality assurance process does not evaluate the quality of reentry plans.**

Unlike adult corrections, almost all youth in secure care will return to the community by the age of 21. Preparing youth to transition back into the community is important for youth to become productive adults. Best practices state that reentry planning should be a part of a youth's intervention planning that begins at the point of placement in a juvenile facility.<sup>22</sup> However, OJJ is not always completing or completing timely reentry plans for OJJ youth in secure care.

We found that 516 (39.8%) of 1,295 youth who entered an OJJ facility during our scope did not have an initial reentry plan started within two days, as required by OJJ policy.<sup>23</sup> We also found that 336 (30.6%) of 1,099 youth who were released from an OJJ facility during our timeframe did not have finalized reentry plans. In addition, 35 (3.2%) of 1,099 youth released from secure care did not have any reentry plans at all. Reentry planning focuses on what youth need to accomplish both within the secure care facility and after the youth is back in the community, such as finding living arrangements, scheduling mental health or substance abuse appointments, enrolling in school, or connecting to jobs.

One potential reason that OJJ staff do not always complete reentry plans is that OJJ's policy regarding these plans is unclear. OJJ policy and practice have both changed several times since 2015, and only recently has staff included reentry planning in the youth's intervention plan. However, this practice has not yet been finalized in policy. Unclear reentry policy could result in staff not fully understanding expectations and result in the untimely completion of plans or ineffective plans. In addition, OJJ's quality assurance process does not evaluate the quality of reentry plans.

**Recommendation 13:** OJJ should clarify and formalize its policy regarding reentry planning and ensure that reentry planning is completed timely.

**Summary of Management's Response:** OJJ agrees with this recommendation and states that the Reintegration planning is now integrated into the Summary of Staffing Report which is completed at the youth's initial staffing that takes place within 7 days of

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<sup>22</sup> National Institute for Corrections, *Desktop Guide to Quality Practice for Working with Youth in Confinement*

<sup>23</sup> The female youth housed at the Ware Youth Center are not included in this population because reentry plans at Ware are completed by the contractor.

his arrival. A quarterly staffing is conducted on each youth and participants include the facility case manager, youth, parent/guardian and probation officer. The youth's current needs are reviewed along with the reintegration plan, with changes being documented. The current reintegration policy is under review and will provide specific guidelines and expectations for plan development. See Appendix A for OJJ's full response.

**Recommendation 14:** OJJ should incorporate evaluating reentry plan quality into its quality assurance process.

**Summary of Management's Response:** OJJ agrees with this recommendation and states that CQIS will incorporate the evaluation of reentry plan quality into their audit tools and processes. See Appendix A for OJJ's full response

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**Bridge City and Swanson-Monroe are old facilities, costly to maintain, and not conducive to OJJ's therapeutic model. While OJJ has a new 72-bed secure care facility, built according to a therapeutic model, it has not become operational due to a lack of funding. If this facility is not opened by fiscal year 2022, OJJ will have spent at least \$918,000 since its completion to maintain an empty building.**

During our site visits to Bridge City and Swanson-Monroe, we observed poor conditions such as holes in walls, broken metal hanging off of a water fountain, broken bleachers in the gym, and dirty bathrooms. OJJ stated that it is difficult to maintain these facilities because they are old and expensive to keep up. According to OJJ, it has spent more than \$13.4 million on maintenance on these two facilities over the past 10 years, and it identified an additional \$9.3 million in needed repairs. Bridge City, for example, is undergoing major sewer maintenance, which has caused flooding in some buildings.

In 2016, OJJ completed construction on a new secure care facility, Acadiana Center for Youth, located in Bunkie, Louisiana. The facility cost \$23 million and was funded through capital outlay. However, the facility is not currently operational because OJJ does not have the funding to open the facility. OJJ estimates that facilities like Acadiana would be more cost effective than maintaining the old facilities at Bridge City and Swanson-Monroe. Although OJJ has begun ordering supplies such as furniture, computers, and medical equipment for the facility, it does not have the funding to hire and train staff. In fiscal years 2016 and 2017, OJJ spent \$240,610 to maintain the facility. If Acadiana is not opened by fiscal year 2022, OJJ will have spent at least \$917,994 over a seven-year period on an empty building. In addition, some of the supplies, such as computers and medical supplies may need to be replaced if the facility remains vacant. Exhibit 12 shows dorm facilities at Swanson-Monroe and Acadiana.

**Exhibit 12**  
**Dorms at Swanson-Monroe and Acadiana**



**Dorm at Swanson-Monroe**



**Dorm at Acadiana**

**Source:** Prepared by legislative auditor's staff using pictures provided by OJJ.

**Bridge City and Swanson-Monroe are also not conducive to OJJ's therapeutic model.** According to the National Institute of Corrections, the physical structure and environment of juvenile confinement facilities has a significant impact on the youth behavior and the likelihood of violence. Acadiana Center for Youth was built according to a therapeutic model and would allow OJJ to fully implement the Louisiana Model for Secure Care (LAMOD) to prepare youth for re-entry into society. Research has shown that therapeutic models have better outcomes than correctional models. In addition, according to OJJ, it would also like to open Acadiana to create more regionalization, allowing youth that live in central Louisiana to be housed closer to home.

**Recommendation 15:** OJJ should continue to seek funding mechanisms that would allow it to staff Acadiana Center for Youth and make it operational.

**Summary of Management's Response:** OJJ agrees with this recommendation and states that it will continue to work with legislators and the Administration to secure funding to staff and operate Acadiana Center for Youth. See Appendix A for OJJ's full response.

## **APPENDIX A: MANAGEMENT'S RESPONSE**





June 8, 2018

Daryl G. Purpera, CPA, CFE  
Louisiana Legislative Auditor  
P. O. Box 94397  
Baton Rouge, LA 70804-9397

Dear Mr. Purpera:

Please accept the attached as our response to the performance audit report of the Office of Juvenile Justice (OJJ) entitled *Oversight of Rehabilitation and Treatment in Secure Care Facilities*. OJJ concurs with all of the findings cited in your report.

The youth committed to OJJ's custody have complex treatment needs. Effective treatment and rehabilitation in our secure facilities is critical to the reduction of recidivism, and key to our youth's success. Therefore, the feedback and recommendations provided by your audit staff concerning rehabilitation and treatment within secure facilities are greatly appreciated.

OJJ would like to express our thanks to your staff for their professionalism and cooperation with the agency while conducting this audit. We will consider all factors outlined in the recommendations provided by your office as we continue to make improvements in the oversight of rehabilitation and treatment within the Office of Juvenile Justice secure facilities.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "JB", is written over the word "Sincerely,".

James Bueche, Ph.D., LCSW  
Deputy Secretary

JB:et

attachments:

OJJ Response to Recommendations  
Checklist for Audit Recommendations

cc: Karen Leblanc, CIA, MSW

**OJJ Response to Legislative Auditor**  
**Performance Audit - Oversight of Rehabilitation and Treatment in Secure Facilities**  
**May 29, 2018**

**Recommendation #1: OJJ should clarify its policy regarding the disposition matrix and overrides to ensure that staff applies the criteria consistently to youth cases.**

Concur. We see the implementation of the disposition matrix as a success. The policy and disposition matrix was implemented in June 2016. In one year, the percentage of non-violent youth placed in secure care was reduced from 51% to 25%. The placement of youth involves more than just the youth's current offense and we agree that policy should meet practice. The Program Manager has met with the Regional Directors and suggested changes are being drafted for review/approval.

**Recommendation #2: OJJ should ensure that staff complete risk assessments and intervention plans timely as required in policy.**

Concur. Regular training will continue to be provided to staff emphasizing the importance of the timely completion of all assessments. As an additional measure, reports providing due dates for risk assessments will continue to be provided to the Regional Directors and Regional Offices.

The timeframe in which the initial IIP is to be completed as outlined in Policy B.2.2 was changed from 48 hours to 7 days and approved on November 3, 2017. The policy now states the initial IIP shall be developed and entered in JETS for all youth assigned to a secure care intake unit within 7 days. This change is in line with the initial IIP Staffing which is to be held within seven (7) days of the youth's arrival at a secure care facility as outlined in Policy B.2.3.

OJJ will continue to monitor timeliness of risk assessments/intervention plans through its CQIS audit process.

**Recommendation #3: OJJ should consider changing its mental health screening and assessment policy to align with PbS standards.**

Concur. YS Policy B.6.5 "Secure Care Mental Health Screening, Appraisal and Evaluation" is currently being reviewed/updated to align timeframes for screening and assessment with PbS. The benefit of PbS is that it creates a process to identify areas in need of improvement and slowly, over time, revise policies and practices to coincide with PbS best practices.

**Recommendation #4: OJJ should consider increasing the number of days psychologists are at the secure care facilities.**

Concur. The required hours for medical personnel are outlined in the current contract with Correct Care Solutions. When the contract approaches renewal, staff hours will be re-negotiated.

**Recommendation #5: OJJ should expand evidence-based programs for youth in general population dorms and consider developing a base treatment curriculum that utilizes evidence-based programs for general population dorms.**

Concur. The current evidence based programs being utilized with youth who are assigned to general population dormitories are *Thinking for a Change (T4C)*, *Positive Adolescent Choices Training (PACT)*, and *Cognitive-Behavioral Interventions (CBI)*.

T4C is a cognitive behavioral program from the National Institute of Corrections (NIC) that teaches youth how to solve problems without getting into trouble. It also helps a youth understand how their thoughts, beliefs, attitudes, and values can cause problems in their lives. The program teaches social and problem-solving skills or how to improve existing social skills.

PACT is a training program that provides practical guidelines and procedures that have proven to be effective in conducting violence prevention training with at-risk youth. The program utilizes a three-part training approach which involves teaching in three areas: violence-risk education, anger management, and social skills.

Youth who have been assessed and recommended for substance abuse services participate in a CBI curriculum which is designed for individuals that are moderate to high need in the area of substance use and well suited for criminal justice populations. The intervention relies on a cognitive behavioral approach to teach participants strategies for avoiding substance use. The program places heavy emphasis on skill building activities to assist with cognitive, social, emotional, and coping skill development.

These three treatment modalities have been adopted for use in all OJJ secure facilities. In addition, there is a plan in place that outlines the development of OJJ staff as trainers to ensure consistent and continuous training opportunities for staff and as part of preservice training.

**Recommendation #6: As OJJ starts implementing more evidence-based programs, it should conduct CPC audits on general population dorms to evaluate the effectiveness of its interventions.**

Concur. CQIS has the qualified, trained staff ready and available to conduct the evaluations when the time comes. This matter has been discussed in staff meetings and a schedule will be established to accomplish the task, once programs are fully implemented.

**Recommendation #7: OJJ should begin collecting program start dates and program completion dates for specialized treatment and vocational programs as a tool to better monitor outcomes and effectiveness. This could include determining if it can create fields in its software program to collect participation and completion information.**

Concur. The Office of Juvenile Justice is reviewing JETS to identify the most effective way of tracking outcomes of secure programming. OJJ currently contracts with the Office of Technology Services (OTS) for support of its current IT system. OTS is currently

involved in ongoing improvement measures; however, resources are limited. OJJ will continue to meet with OTS to improve the system and capture this information.

**Recommendation #8: OJJ should ensure that staff consistently and thoroughly document group therapy sessions.**

Concur. Documentation of group therapy sessions is monitored by the case manager's direct supervisor, Facility Treatment Director, and Deputy Director. These individuals will be held accountable to ensure documentation takes place. Quarterly Treatment Audits are conducted to closely monitor compliance with policy requirements, to include this documentation, as well as identify and provide additional staff training as needed. Group therapy documentation will continue to be monitored through the Treatment audits, as well as through CQIS annual audits.

**Recommendation #9: Management should monitor the content of group therapy sessions.**

Concur. The Supervisor, Facility Treatment Director, and Deputy Director are responsible for monthly observations of group therapy. The reports are provided to the Director of Treatment and Rehabilitation in Central Office for review and recommendations when needed. Group therapy is also monitoring as part of CQIS audits. The current procedure is being reviewed to assess the effectiveness of current protocol and will be revised to ensure the most effective monitoring.

**Recommendation #10: OJJ should begin collecting youth stages and dorm phases to determine whether positive reinforcements are occurring and effective.**

Concur. OJJ's LaMod Coordinator is working with the facility Group Leaders on documentation relative to stages, etc. The current forms used by Social Services for weekly documentation have been reviewed to determine the best method of collecting information regarding youth stages and dorm phases. OTS is being consulted to begin facilitating the changes.

**Recommendation #11: OJJ should begin calculating recidivism rates by program.**

Concur. After JETS is modified to capture program placement and completion, CQIS will incorporate the calculation of recidivism rates by program into its data warehouse.

**Recommendation #12: OJJ should strengthen existing vocational programs and work towards developing additional vocational opportunities, including programs and community relationship to assist youth in obtaining jobs.**

Concur. OJJ anticipates strengthening and adding vocational opportunities through the improvement and expansion of the Jobs for America's Graduates (JAG) program. Additionally, OJJ will continue to ask for more funding to increase vocational programs and job readiness.

**Recommendation #13: OJJ should clarify and formalize its policy regarding reentry planning and ensure that reentry planning is completed timely.**

Concur. The Individualized Services/Reintegration Plan (ISRP) form is no longer used. The Reintegration planning is now integrated into the Summary of Staffing Report which is completed at the youth's initial staffing that takes place within 7 days of his arrival. A quarterly staffing is conducted on each youth and participants include the facility case

manager, youth, parent/guardian and probation officer. The youth's current needs are reviewed along with the reintegration plan, with changes being documented. In addition to the plan review at the staffing, the probation officer, youth and parent provide input regarding the most appropriate and available community programming. This allows the plan to be specific to the youth's individual needs while addressing any other additional factors in order to tailor referrals that will provide the youth the best opportunity to be successful. The current reintegration policy is under review and will provide specific guidelines and expectations for plan development.

**Recommendation #14: OJJ should incorporate evaluating reentry plan quality into its quality assurance process.**

Concur. CQIS will incorporate the evaluation of reentry plan quality into their audit tools and processes.

**Recommendation #15: OJJ should continue to seek funding mechanisms that would allow it to staff Acadiana Center for Youth and make it operational.**

Concur. OJJ will continue to work with legislators and the Administration to secure funding to staff and operate Acadiana Center for Youth.



## APPENDIX B: SCOPE AND METHODOLOGY

This report provides the results of our performance audit of the Office of Juvenile Justice (OJJ). We conducted this performance audit under the provisions of Title 24 of the Louisiana Revised Statutes of 1950, as amended. This audit primarily covered the time period of July 1, 2013, through June 30, 2017, although some analyses include information from fiscal year 2018. Our audit objective was:

### **To evaluate OJJ's oversight over rehabilitation and treatment in secure care facilities.**

We conducted this performance audit in accordance with generally-accepted *Government Auditing Standards* issued by the Comptroller General of the United States. Those standards require that we plan and perform the audit to obtain sufficient, appropriate evidence to provide reasonable basis for our findings and conclusions based on our audit objective. We believe the evidence obtained provides a reasonable basis for our findings and conclusions based on our audit objective. To answer our objective, we reviewed internal controls relevant to the audit objective and performed the following audit steps:

- Researched and reviewed relevant state and federal statutes and regulations related to OJJ.
- Researched juvenile justice-related audits and practices in other states and studies conducted by local and national organizations.
- Interviewed OJJ staff and juvenile justice stakeholders, such as the Louisiana Center for Children's Rights, the Department of Child and Family Services, and the Louisiana Department of Education, and participated in the Task Force on Secure Care Standards and Auditing.
- Conducted site visits of all secure care facilities, including Ware Youth Center and Acadiana Center for Youth. During these visits, we interviewed youth and staff.
- Obtained and analyzed JETS data for youth in OJJ custody during fiscal years 2013 through 2017 using Excel and Audit Command Language (ACL).
- Obtained CAJUN data from the Department of Corrections (DOC) in order to identify which youth recidivated into the adult corrections system.
- Calculated youth returns to custody, which includes any secure care youth who were released from OJJ custody and returned to either OJJ or DOC custody. These analyses differed from OJJ's recidivism analysis because we did not group youth in cohorts based on the fiscal year of their release.

- Used Louisiana Workforce Commission data on wage reporting to identify which youth released from secure care obtained a job.
- Obtained youth medical files from Correct Care Solutions, OJJ’s contracted medical provider for secure care facilities.
  - Using the medical data, we reviewed 100 youth records to determine if youth received mental health assessments.
  - We pulled a targeted selection of 100 youth in order to have a cross-section of secure care youth, including youth both released and in custody at Bridge City Center for Youth, Swanson Center for Youth-Monroe, and Swanson Center for Youth-Columbia. We also included youth who adjudicated with a mandatory minimum sentence (also known as “Vitter” youth) and youth who spent time in the behavioral intervention unit (Victory Unit at Swanson-Monroe, now closed).
- Obtained and analyzed OJJ continuous quality improvement services audits from 2016 and 2017, quarterly medical audits, CPC and treatment audits.
- Discussed the results of our analyses with OJJ management and provided OJJ with the results of our data analyses.

## APPENDIX C: OFFENSES FOR YOUTH IN SECURE CARE

### Most Severe Offenses of Youth in Secure Care Fiscal Years 2013 and 2017

Rank of Severity	Statute	Offense	Class	Violent/Non-Violent	Type	Mandatory Minimum Offense	Number of Youth in FY 2013	Number of Youth in FY 2017
1	14:30	First degree murder	Homicide	Violent	Felony	Yes	5	2
2	14:30.1	Second degree murder	Homicide	Violent	Felony	Yes	10	8
3	14:42	Aggravated rape	Sex	Violent	Felony	Yes	13	13
3	14:42y16	First degree rape	Sex	Violent	Felony	Yes	0	4
4	15:04.3	Armed robbery with a firearm	Robbery	Violent	Felony	Yes	6	8
4	14:42.1	Forcible rape	Sex	Violent	Felony		5	7
4	14:42.1y16	Second degree rape	Sex	Violent	Felony		0	1
5	14:64	Armed robbery	Robbery	Violent	Felony	Yes	52	52
5	14:32.6	First degree feticide	Homicide	Violent	Felony		0	1
6	14:44	Aggravated kidnapping	Other Violent	Violent	Felony	Yes	0	1
7	14:31	Manslaughter	Homicide	Violent	Felony		7	2
8	14:43	Simple rape	Sex	Violent	Felony		10	7
8	14:43y16	Third degree rape	Sex	Violent	Felony		0	2
10	15:04.4	Second degree robbery	Robbery	Violent	Felony		3	1
11	14:43.2	Second degree sexual battery	Sex	Violent	Felony		0	1
12	14:51	Aggravated arson	Other Violent	Violent	Felony		3	0

Rank of Severity	Statute	Offense	Class	Violent/Non-Violent	Type	Mandatory Minimum Offense	Number of Youth in FY 2013	Number of Youth in FY 2017
13	14:43.3	Oral sexual battery	Sex	Violent	Felony		4	4
14	14:43.1	Sexual battery	Sex	Violent	Felony		32	21
15	14:32	Negligent homicide	Homicide	Violent	Felony		4	2
17	14:60	Aggravated burglary	Burglary	Violent	Felony		12	2
18	14:34	Aggravated battery	Assault and Battery	Violent	Felony		25	11
18	14:34.7	Aggravated second degree battery	Assault and Battery	Violent	Felony		2	3
18	14:37.1	Assault by drive-by shooting	Assault and Battery	Violent	Felony		2	0
18	15:04.2	Carjacking	Robbery	Violent	Felony		1	3
20	14:37.4	Aggravated assault with a firearm	Assault and Battery	Violent	Felony		4	7
20	14:93	Cruelty to juveniles	Other Violent	Violent	Felony		1	0
20	15:33.3	Cruelty to the infirmed	Other Violent	Violent	Felony		1	0
20	14:81	Indecent behavior with juveniles	Sex	Non-Violent	Felony		6	15
21	14:89	Crime against nature	Sex	Violent	Felony		1	2
22	15:04.1	First degree robbery	Robbery	Violent	Felony		12	9
23	14:65	Simple robbery	Robbery	Violent	Felony		49	29
24	14:37	Aggravated assault	Assault and Battery	Violent	Misdemeanor		13	7
26	14:34.5	Battery of a correctional facility employee	Assault and Battery	Violent	Misdemeanor		9	8
26	14:34.2	Battery of a police officer	Assault and Battery	Violent	Misdemeanor		11	3
27	14:34.3	Battery of a school teacher	Assault and Battery	Violent	Misdemeanor		10	2
28	15:18.1	Aggravated incest	Sex	Violent	Felony		4	0

Rank of Severity	Statute	Offense	Class	Violent/Non-Violent	Type	Mandatory Minimum Offense	Number of Youth in FY 2013	Number of Youth in FY 2017
29	40:964C	Possession of schedule II drugs	Drugs	Non-Violent	Felony		1	0
29	40:967	Possession, manufacture, and distribution of drugs	Drugs	Non-Violent	Felony		31	2
30	14:25	Accessory after the fact	Other	Non-Violent	Misdemeanor		0	2
30	14:34.6	Disarming a peace officer	Other Violent	Violent	Felony		0	1
31	56:21.3	Possession of controlled dangerous substance on school grounds	Drugs	Non-Violent	Felony		5	1
32	56:11.1	False representation of a controlled substance	Drugs	Non-Violent	Felony		1	0
33	14:45	Simple kidnapping	Other Violent	Violent	Felony		1	1
34	14:52	Simple arson	Other Property	Non-Violent	Felony		8	5
35	14:1081C	Aggravated flight from an officer	Other Violent	Violent	Felony		4	5
35	14:96	Aggravated obstruction of a highway of commerce	Other Non-Violent	Non-Violent	Felony		1	0
35	14:34.1	Second degree battery	Assault and Battery	Violent	Felony		20	9
36	14:100	Hit-and-run driving	Other Property	Non-Violent	Misdemeanor		4	1
36	15:48.2	Resisting a police officer with force or violence	Other Violent	Violent	Felony		4	1
37	16:09.1	Intimidating, impeding or injuring witnesses	Other Non-Violent	Non-Violent	Felony		1	0
37	16:10.1	Obstruction of justice	Public Order	Non-Violent	Felony		0	2
43	14:55	Aggravated criminal damage to property	Other Violent	Violent	Felony		7	0

Rank of Severity	Statute	Offense	Class	Violent/Non-Violent	Type	Mandatory Minimum Offense	Number of Youth in FY 2013	Number of Youth in FY 2017
45	15:35.2	Carrying a firearm or dangerous weapon on school property	Weapons	Non-Violent	Felony		7	3
45	15:21.1	Pornography involving juveniles	Sex	Non-Violent	Felony		0	1
45	15:02.1	Simple burglary of a pharmacy	Burglary	Non-Violent	Felony		1	0
50	14:78	Incest	Sex	Non-Violent	Felony		2	0
50	15:50.3	Tampering with surveillance or monitoring equipment	Public Order	Non-Violent	Felony		0	1
51	14:35.3	Domestic abuse battery	Assault and Battery	Violent	Misdemeanor		3	3
51	15:05.1	Purse snatching	Robbery	Violent	Felony		7	0
52	14:37.7	Domestic abuse aggravated assault	Assault and Battery	Violent	Felony		0	1
52	14:328	Obstruction or interference with members of staff, faculty, or students of educational institutions	Public Order	Non-Violent	Misdemeanor		1	0
52	15:02.2	Simple burglary of an inhabited dwelling	Burglary	Non-Violent	Felony		57	20
52	15:02.6	Simple burglary of religious building	Burglary	Non-Violent	Felony		1	0
53	14:62	Simple burglary	Burglary	Non-Violent	Felony		75	33
54	14:35	Simple battery	Assault and Battery	Non-Violent	Misdemeanor		35	10
54	14:35.2	Simple battery of the infirm	Assault and Battery	Non-Violent	Misdemeanor		1	0
55	14:38.2	Assault on a school teacher	Assault and Battery	Non-Violent	Misdemeanor		4	0

Rank of Severity	Statute	Offense	Class	Violent/Non-Violent	Type	Mandatory Minimum Offense	Number of Youth in FY 2013	Number of Youth in FY 2017
55	14:38	Simple assault	Assault and Battery	Non-Violent	Misdemeanor		3	1
56	14:108	Resisting an officer	Other Non-Violent	Non-Violent	Misdemeanor		12	9
57	14:39	Negligent injuring	Other Violent	Violent	Misdemeanor		1	1
59	14:94	Illegal carrying and discharge of weapons	Weapons	Violent	Felony		8	1
59	14:95(E)	Illegal carrying of weapons with controlled dangerous substance in possession	Public Safety	Violent	Felony		2	0
59	15:09.1	Illegal possession of stolen firearms	Weapons	Non-Violent	Felony		2	3
60	14:95	Illegal carrying of weapons	Weapons	Non-Violent	Misdemeanor		5	1
60	15:35.8	Illegal possession of a handgun by a juvenile	Weapons	Non-Violent	Misdemeanor		12	3
62	14:110B	Simple escape	Other Non-Violent	Non-Violent	Felony		7	2
63	15:02.8	Home invasion	Burglary	Non-Violent	Felony		2	1
66	15:02.3	Unauthorized entry of an inhabited dwelling	Burglary	Non-Violent	Felony		11	3
67	14:108.1A	Flight from an officer	Other	Non-Violent	Misdemeanor		2	0
67	15:48.1	Flight from an officer	Other Non-Violent	Non-Violent	Misdemeanor		0	1
75	14:69C	Illegal possession of stolen things, greater than \$500	Theft	Non-Violent	Felony		2	0
77	15:08.4	Unauthorized use of a motor vehicle	Theft	Non-Violent	Felony		11	6
77	14:68B	Unauthorized use of a movable, greater \$1,000	Theft	Non-Violent	Felony		3	0
78	14:67C	Theft, greater than \$500	Theft	Non-Violent	Felony		3	1

Rank of Severity	Statute	Offense	Class	Violent/Non-Violent	Type	Mandatory Minimum Offense	Number of Youth in FY 2013	Number of Youth in FY 2017
80	15:07.2	Identity theft	Theft	Non-Violent	Felony		1	0
80	14:67B	Theft, between \$300 and \$500	Theft	Non-Violent	Felony		4	0
80	14:67B2	Theft, between \$500 and \$1,600	Theft	Non-Violent	Felony		3	0
80	14:67B1	Theft, greater than \$1,500	Theft	Non-Violent	Felony		2	0
80	14:67B3	Theft, less than \$500	Theft	Non-Violent	Misdemeanor		3	1
80	14:67B4	Theft, less than \$750	Theft	Non-Violent	Misdemeanor		0	3
81	14:56B	Simple criminal damage to property, between \$500 and \$50,000	Other Property	Non-Violent	Felony		2	1
81	14:56B(2)	Simple criminal damage to property, between \$500 and \$50,000	Other Property	Non-Violent	Misdemeanor		1	0
81	14:56B(1)	Simple criminal damage to property, less than \$500	Other Property	Non-Violent	Misdemeanor		1	3
82	15:07.1	Theft of goods	Theft	Non-Violent	Misdemeanor		6	0
82	14:67A	Theft, less than \$300	Theft	Non-Violent	Misdemeanor		4	0
83	14:56A	Simple criminal damage to property, less than \$500	Other Property	Non-Violent	Misdemeanor		3	1
84	14:69B2	Illegal possession of stolen things, between \$500 and \$1,500	Theft	Non-Violent	Felony		1	1
89	14:67.3C	Unauthorized use of a credit card, greater than \$500	Theft	Non-Violent	Felony		1	0
90	15:07.3	Theft of a motor vehicle	Theft	Non-Violent	Misdemeanor		1	1
94	15:02.4	Unauthorized entry of a business	Burglary	Non-Violent	Felony		0	2

Rank of Severity	Statute	Offense	Class	Violent/Non-Violent	Type	Mandatory Minimum Offense	Number of Youth in FY 2013	Number of Youth in FY 2017
95	14:69A	Illegal possession of stolen things, less than \$300	Theft	Non-Violent	Misdemeanor		2	0
99	14:68A	Unauthorized use of a movable, less than \$1,000	Theft	Non-Violent	Misdemeanor		1	0
107	14:59	Criminal mischief	Public Order	Non-Violent	Misdemeanor		2	0
108	14:63	Criminal trespassing	Public Order	Non-Violent	Misdemeanor		1	0
113	40:966C	Possession of schedule I drugs	Drugs	Non-Violent	Misdemeanor		3	0
114	40:966E	Possession of marijuana	Drugs	Non-Violent	Misdemeanor		2	0
115	40:1023	Possession of drug paraphernalia	Public Order	Non-Violent	Misdemeanor		1	0
117	14:103	Disturbing the peace	Public Order	Non-Violent	Misdemeanor		1	0
<b>Total</b>							<b>731</b>	<b>386</b>
<b>Source:</b> Prepared by legislative auditor's staff using data from OJJ.								



## APPENDIX D: STATISTICS ON RETURNS TO CUSTODY

**Returns to Custody, by Race**  
**Youth Exiting and Returning in Fiscal Years 2013 - 2017**

Type of Return	Asian		American Indian or Alaskan Native		Black or African American		Mixed		Other-None of Above		Pacific Islander		Hispanic		White	
	Number	Percent	Number	Percent	Number	Percent	Number	Percent	Number	Percent	Number	Percent	Number	Percent	Number	Percent
Did Not Return	2	66.7%	3	50.0%	690	57.8%	16	76.2%	3	100.0%	1	100.0%	7	70.0%	173	69.5%
Returned - DOC Custody	1	33.3%	1	16.7%	359	30.1%	3	14.3%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	1	10.0%	58	23.3%
Returned - Secure Care	0	0.0%	2	33.3%	122	10.2%	1	4.8%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	2	20.0%	13	5.2%
Returned - OJJ Not Secure Care	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	22	1.8%	1	4.8%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	5	2.0%
<b>Total</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>1,193</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>21</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>249</b>	<b>100%</b>

**Source:** Prepared by legislative auditor's staff using data from OJJ and DOC.

**Returns to Custody by Sex**  
**Youth Exiting and Returning in Fiscal Years 2013 - 2017**

Type of Return	Female		Male	
	Number	Percent	Number	Percent
Did Not Return	106	82.2%	789	58.1%
Returned - DOC Custody	5	3.9%	418	30.8%
Returned - Secure Care	12	9.3%	128	9.4%
Returned - OJJ Not Secure Care	6	4.7%	22	1.6%
<b>Total</b>	<b>129</b>	<b>100.0%</b>	<b>1,357</b>	<b>100.0%</b>

**Source:** Prepared by legislative auditor's staff using data from OJJ and DOC.

<b>Returns to Custody by Release Type Youth Exiting and Returning in Fiscal Years 2013 - 2017</b>				
<b>Type of Return</b>	<b>Released from Secure Care</b>		<b>Released from Non-Secure Care</b>	
	<b>Number</b>	<b>Percent</b>	<b>Number</b>	<b>Percent</b>
Did Not Return	450	56.5%	445	64.6%
Returned - DOC Custody	234	29.4%	189	27.4%
Returned - Secure Care	113	14.2%	27	3.9%
Returned - OJJ Not Secure Care	0	0.0%	28	4.1%
<b>Total</b>	<b>797</b>	<b>100.0%</b>	<b>689</b>	<b>100.0%</b>
<b>Source:</b> Prepared by legislative auditor's staff using data from OJJ and DOC.				

<b>Returns to Custody by Youth With Mandatory Minimums Youth Exiting and Returning in Fiscal Years 2013 - 2017</b>				
<b>Type of Return</b>	<b>Youth With Mandatory Minimums</b>		<b>Youth Without Mandatory Minimums</b>	
	<b>Number</b>	<b>Percent</b>	<b>Number</b>	<b>Percent</b>
Did Not Return	84	64.6%	811	59.8%
Returned - DOC Custody	40	30.8%	383	28.2%
Returned - Secure Care	4	3.1%	136	10.0%
Returned - OJJ Not Secure Care	2	1.5%	26	1.9%
<b>Total</b>	<b>130</b>	<b>100.0%</b>	<b>1,356</b>	<b>100.0%</b>
<b>Source:</b> Prepared by legislative auditor's staff using data from OJJ and DOC.				