

MINUTES OF THE SPECIAL STUDY COMMITTEE ON SOCIAL AND REHABILITATIVE
INSTITUTIONS

Held in Room 313-S, at the Statehouse at 12:30 p.m., on February 7, 1980.

Members present were:

Senator Robert Talkington, Chairman
Representative Joe Hoagland, Vice Chairman
Senator Mike Johnston
Representative David Heinemann
Representative Phil Martin

Staff present were:

Fred Carman, Revisor's Office
Emalene Correll, Legislative Research Department
Marlin Rein, Legislative Research Department
Ray Hauke, Legislative Research Department
Robert A. Coldsnow, Legislative Counsel

Conferees appearing before the committee were:

Carl L. Davidson, Activity Therapist II, Recreation Director, Youth
Center at Atchison
Ellen M. Cameron, Chief Social Worker, Psychologist II, Youth Center
at Atchison
Michael P. Driscoll, Social Worker II, Cottonwood Cottage, Youth Cen-
ter at Atchison
Dora Gregory, YSW IV, Youth Center at Atchison, Resource Person

The Chairman called the meeting to order.

Mr. Davidson addressed the committee regarding problems he has encountered as an employee at YCAA. He stated that, in 1978, his supervisor, Dan Wells, informed the administration that Davidson was not following specific instructions, and his evaluation reflected this. Mr. Davidson said he had never been told what his duties as recreational director and the program for his department should be. The first knowledge he had that he was not following specific instructions was when he learned of it on his evaluation. In an attempt to find out what his duties were and why he had received what he felt to be an unjust evaluation, Mr. Davidson stated he tried to receive assistance from the administration, Dr. Kearns, but to no avail. He said Dr. Kearns had been confronted by EEO and SRS on some of his concerns but has refused to reply. He noted that 60 to 75% of the employees in his department have appealed their evaluations and estimated the number to be 25 or more which he felt was a high percentage.

Representative Hoagland asked Mr. Davidson if evaluations were given when he first started working at YCAA in 1972. Mr. Davidson preferred not to go back that far in time. In answer to further questions, he stated that, as a result of the evaluation process, he felt he had been discriminated against. Statements had been made on his employee evaluation that were not true, and he felt they had been made in retaliation for his EEO activities. In his opinion, if evaluations are made, employees should first be told what is expected of them so they can work toward achieving that goal. To date, he has never been told this

nor had the program director ever drawn up for him or his department a program to follow. Mr. Davidson said no one had reviewed with him the Civil Service procedures and guidelines except for those that apply to appeals. He was not sure how problems such as his could be corrected, and he made no recommendations.

In his eight years at YCAA, Mr. Davidson stated instances he had heard of concerning student abuse were hearsay, and he personally had not observed any instances of abuse.

Mrs. Cameron read a statement (Attachment A) outlining problems at YCAA as she had experienced them and making recommendations to the legislature regarding changes and specific concerns relating to the SRS system.

Representative Martin asked Mrs. Cameron if any administrative policy had been established to cut down on the increasing number of runaways. She replied there was no written policy. She noted constant efforts were made by the staff to keep students from doing this, but students feel frustrated and bored, especially on weekends, for lack of program. Mrs. Cameron said different divisions at YCAA try to submit ideas and plans, but since the Superintendent, Mr. Wilson, is not on campus full time to implement them, they are not supported. She noted the Department of SRS has not had a meeting of YCAA division heads since November, 1979, and that one was not held for the purpose of major decision-making. She felt a program should be developed that would adapt to the needs of the student rather than make the student fit in to what was available.

The Chairman questioned Mrs. Cameron regarding an incident relating to the decision-making process involving the superintendent's secretary and the YCAA social workers as mentioned in her statement. She clarified the date of the incident as being November 9, 1979.

Mr. Driscoll stated his concerns centered around the law passed by the legislature in 1979 that resulted in reclassification which upgraded the line staff but created the problem of grandfathering in the old staff at a higher level position than they are capable of handling. Employees with high school or GED degrees have been placed in higher pay ranges than some clinical staff, and some new employees receive higher pay than some with several years' service. He stated this has resulted in a large turnover rate with staff dissatisfaction, and the program has suffered. He noted it was hard to hire new people when they know a person with a GED certificate will be their supervisor. Employees have written letters of protest to the Governor and to the Secretary of Administration. Mr. Driscoll said one benefit of the law had been the requirement for in-service training which was long overdue, in his opinion.

Mr. Coldsnow asked Mr. Driscoll if there was a policy with respect to experience equating to higher education. Mr. Driscoll stated he understood one year of experience equalled one year of higher education. To a question asking if a GED certificate and four years' experience, then, equalled a bachelor's degree, Mr. Driscoll replied it would. Mr. Coldsnow also inquired if someone from either state or SRS personnel services had come to the Atchison campus to implement the career

ladder reclassification. He replied that a person did come from Topeka to do some groundwork, but when the plan was put into effect, the information given in Atchison was ignored. Mr. Driscoll expressed the opinion that the plan had several shortcomings. He said a bill to provide for the career ladder was not heard in the legislature as to pros and cons but was withdrawn from consideration and was later implemented by the state personnel division with funds being appropriated to pay for the reclassification.

Mr. Driscoll was questioned about administrative personnel on campus at Atchison. He stated the superintendent is shared with the Youth Center at Topeka and was at Atchison about one day a week. The assistant superintendent and the line staff have all the power. He noted division heads as denoted on organizational charts should be making important decisions, but, under the present regime, important decisions such as those concerning treatment, are not made while informal meetings are the rule. Mr. Driscoll said morale is undermined by one department being played against another, and sometimes the students take advantage of this.

Mr. Carman questioned Mr. Driscoll regarding who was the superintendent, assistant superintendent, acting superintendent, program director, etc., at Atchison, his answers to which pointed to the fact that Mr. Driscoll did not know who held these positions.

Mr. Driscoll recommended that the legislature consider placing the youth centers within the Department of Corrections. He said this is done in other states, and, in his opinion, SRS does not have the specialization needed to be responsible for juvenile offenders. He suggested that prevention programs be instituted to deal with juveniles before they are sent to youth centers, especially in the high incidence areas of Salina, Wichita, Johnson and Wyandotte Counties, and Topeka.

Mr. Coldsnow asked what was the stated or recognized mission of the Youth Center at Atchison to which Mr. Driscoll replied it is unstated.

Mr. Driscoll suggested that an independent panel of experts study the youth centers to determine what direction should be taken. He noted this study could be funded by using funds on hand from unfilled staff vacancies. He also felt a youth center recidivism study would be helpful to determine what returns the state receives on its investment in these youths.

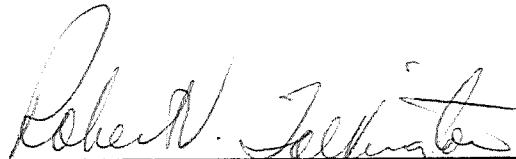
Mr. Driscoll was asked how the number of runaways at Atchison compared with the national average. He replied data was not comparable since youths assigned to YCAA have already been in other institutions on a voluntary basis. He pointed out that residency at Atchison is not voluntary but is by court order. He said students were a more serious management problem now than formerly. He felt a large staff was some deterrent to misbehavior but that staff should be better qualified. At the present time, there are more staff than students at the Atchison facility. Representative Martin noted that perhaps all problems at Atchison are not directly related to the Department of SRS, and maybe the legislature needs to be more attuned to the times. Mr. Driscoll agreed. He urged the committee to visit Atchison, that many

people in different departments were concerned, and he felt the YCAA needed the committee's close scrutiny.

There was discussion with Mrs. Gregory regarding an incident described in a January 5 memo. Mrs. Gregory felt she had been harassed and the incident related to an alleged infraction of rules on her part which resulted in a reprimand being added to her personnel file without her knowledge when she understood the matter had been cleared up satisfactorily with her supervisor, Mr. Vigola. She felt he had not been honest with her in what he intended to do. It was noted the incident was later removed from her personnel file.

The Chairman advised all conferees appearing before the committee to notify him or Mr. Coldsnow if they experienced any recrimination in their jobs due to their statements to this committee.

The meeting adjourned at 1:40 p.m.



Chairman

ATTENDANCE SHEET

FEB. 7, 1980

<u>NAME</u>	<u>REPRESENTING</u>	<u>TOWN</u>
Paul Duffy McDowell	Levy, Ambrosio + McDowell	Topeka
Terry K. Levy	"	"
Hal Des JARDIN	SRT	"
Richard Greene	Senator Winter	"
Sharon Gordon		"
Jack Buller	Self	"
Ethel May Miller	Kansas Assn. Retarded Citizens	"
DAVID SACKMAN	DIV OF BUDGET	"
Ellen Cameron	self - employed YCAA	Atchison
Dick Cameron	State Representative	Atchison #47kt
Dana Gregory	YCAA YSWY	Rushville, Mo.
Mike Drussell	YCAA social worker	Atchison
Charles D. Hamm	SRS	State H. Bldg. Topeka
David M. Klotz	Assoc. of CMHCs of Ks.	Topeka
Hamm	SRS	

To: The Legislative Legal Council and the Legislative Investigating Committee
From: Ellen Cameron, M.S.W., A.C.S.W.
Chief Social Worker, Atchison Youth Center at Atchison, Ks.

State Institutions charged with the responsibility of treating delinquent youth are ensnared in political and philosophical controversy. The Youth Center at Atchison is no exception. There are many practices which prevents a student at the Y.C.A.A. to reach his maximum potential. Far more serious than not progressing is regressing and suffering damage from being in an institution with no program.

The State-supported program is costly in terms of the tax-payer dollars as well as cost of human lives. As there is no research project, it is impossible to give an accurate recidivism rate. However, as social workers, we have a keen awareness of the number of requests received from other correctional institutions for records for youth discharged from the Y.C.A.A. who have again encountered legal difficulties. Also, we often stay in contact with youth we have worked with and through them know of their successes and failures. We continue to have problems with the youth while in our program. A clipping from The Atchison Globe ^{states} ~~is attached.~~

states	1978	1979	%
run	42	86	50
thefts	18	36	of the

We believe it is a realistic goal to be able to modify behavior patterns of delinquent youth in most instances. Poor management practices, lack of positive leadership, and misuse of clinical staff are directly responsible for the ineffectual way we deal with our students — at Y.C.A.A.

Because of our many concerns, each of the social workers will address different issues. In so doing, we believe the legislators will better be able to understand how the program or lack of program is tied to the many personel problems. Valuable time is used in trying to resolve conflicts which are a result of the administration at all levels.

Realistically, the management and treatment aspects of a youth's program can not be separated. A youth's overall progress is measured by his adjustment to the institution. This is calculated daily by the line staff. Consequently, a youth's progress is

subjectively measured. It is evident that some line staff are punitive and punishment-oriented. (in contrast to treatment oriented) However, most line staff are capable of doing an excellent job but their frustrations can interfere with their job performance. The line staff have the same frustrations as the clinical staff as to management, policies, communication, and authority, etc. A program costing over \$60.00 per day per child should be cost-effective in terms of helping a youth return to society and make a positive adjustment. Sixty dollars per day is quite costly for custodial or detention services.

I would like to enumerate some general concerns to be considered when evaluating the fulfillment of the purpose of the Youth Center.

Concern A. The clinical staff's expertise is not fully utilized. The clinical staff I refer to: 4 social workers with Master degrees
2 psychologists with Master degrees
3 psychologists with Ph.D.

Example: Ivy cottage is a security cottage where youth with the most serious behavior problems are housed. However, the Ivy cottage program is designed and administered by the wife of the D.C.C.S. She is untrained and holds a GED. No clinical people are attached to the cottage. At a January meeting of cottage coordinators, Dr. Kearns stated Mrs. Vigola was writing a new program for the cottage.

Example: Maple Cottage, the other smaller cottage has been in a constant state of change. To such a degree that even the staff working in the cottage have not been sure of their role. Mrs. Gregory, the YSW IV (head cottage parent) is highly respected and a very capable person. She has asked for clinical assistance and is most willing to cooperate in programs for the benefit of the youths. However, she is criticized and reprimanded frequently by her supervisor. An example is a memo attached to this report which is self explanatory. Another example of how competent staff is hassled.

Example: Redwood Cottage has not had an assigned psychologist for almost a year. The social worker resigned in December to take a position in Arizona. Mike Driscoll agreed to provide social services at Redwood in addition to duties at Cottonwood Cottage. However, he requested an "acting coordinator" be assigned to the cottage in light of the ongoing problems at Redwood between clinical staff and the YSW IV. On January 08, 1980, Dr. Kearns told me he himself would be the "acting coordinator" which was most acceptable. On January 09, 1980, Dr. Kearns issued a memo stating Gary Schooler, YSW IV would assume the acting coordinator role. So again another cottage has an untrained coordinator who has the authority which should be delegated to a clinical staff.

Example: The program director lives in Valley Falls so is not available for consultation in crisis situations after 5:00 P.M. In fact, of the 5 psychologists, the shortest distance one lives to Atchison is 30 miles. When the school day ends at 3:00 P.M., the only formalized program ends and at that time boredom becomes an issue which triggers many things.

Concern B. The staffing pattern in the cottages creates difficult working conditions. For instance, on February 03, 1980, (Sunday) Oak Cottage with 23 youths had 1 female on duty from 6:00 A.M. to 4:00 P.M. She was unable to even take a break. This type of thing is more typical than not.

Concern C. The decision making process — The formal and informal process is used as it fits the situation. Decisions and changes are made and implemented at will. This creates uncertainty, ill feelings, and a chaotic atmosphere. An example of this is that the admission process was changed and implemented without being discussed with the social workers who are responsible for the admission/intake. The superintendent's secretary was interviewing the new admission (in early November) for statistical purposes. The social workers believe this is a social work function as questioning a youth on admission day about his family background, etc. can evoke feelings which would best be dealt with by a

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Wheeler

clinical person.

The Social workers then tried to persuade the Superintendent to return to the original method for the admission process. This was to no avail—the Superintendent's secretary exerts more authority than is acceptable.

Concern D.

Program — The only formalized program is the school and it is administered by Unified School District 409.

Program Director — He has been at the Y.C.A.A. approximately fourteen months. During that time he has not made any significant program changes nor implemented any new changes. Not only has he not developed new programs, he tried to prevent the birth of what has proven to be a very successful volunteer program. The social workers developed and supervise this program— The volunteers are students at Benedictine College and make a valuable contribution to the youth. To date, the social workers have to constantly defend the program to keep it alive. Progressive and/or innovative ideas are played down.

Concern E.

Priorities and student's needs—We strongly support conservation of time, energy and purchases. However, "cuts" almost always involve students while the demands of certain individuals are approved.

In January the cottages were notified the state would no longer provide shampoo, deodorant and other personal items necessary to maintain good hygiene. Blankets may be laundered once a year. As supplies are part of the environment where change takes place, it is essential that minimum needs be met. Students needs, such as craft supplies, toilet articles, recreation supplies, etc. are cut while personnel from the YCAT continue to make daily trips to YCAA.

Concern F.

Use of Authority— At the Youth Center authority is not "given" but "taken." The program director defers to the Director of Child Care Services for his decisions.

The misuse of authority results, partly, because the YCAA does not have a stated philosophy and/or purpose of existence. I am attaching memos to point out the type of role confusion, authority misuse, etc.

Conclusion: The care and treatment of delinquent youths is a costly business in terms of tax dollars. Just as important, is the measurement of humaneness. Therefore, I urge you to listen to the employees concerns and with your knowledge of people, due process, treatment objectives and consideration of tax dollars use, make recommendations to legislate changes at the Y.C.A.A. We are genuinely concerned about the welfare of all Kansas youth and those in the SRS system in particular!

Thank-you for your time.

Ellen Cameron