

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 20, 1980.

Members present were:

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

Staff present were:

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

Conferees appearing before the committee were:

Bill Price, Activity Therapist II, Youth Center at Topeka
Ann Grabauskas, Topeka, mother of state institution patient

The Chairman called the meeting to order.

Mr. Price related his past work experience starting in 1938 with a WPA road gang, working for the Sedgwick County Welfare Department, and, in 1947, being employed as a juvenile guidance worker at the Boys' Industrial School, now the Youth Center at Topeka. At that time, the cottages were run by three people: the cottage father, the cottage mother, and the supervisor. He listed various dehumanizing punishments that were employed at that time. As juvenile guidance worker, he was responsible for fifty boys at the institution as well as 170 home visitations. He acted as recreational director, relieved the cottage parents, worked with religious and social programs for the boys, and took them to the doctor. There were no social workers, psychiatrists, or psychologists at that time.

In 1949, two black social workers were hired in his place, and Mr. Price requested that he be put on the same level as the recreational therapy director at the Atchison campus but was told he would be making more money than the campus school teacher. Mr. Price listed other examples occurring over the years where he felt he had been discriminated against. He had never had quarters furnished to him as some workers have which he felt is unfair since those workers get cost of living raises but do not have to pay the higher utilities, transportation, etc., costs that he has to pay. He felt all employees living in state housing except the Governor should pay a benefit tax to pay for the upkeep. He had been refused permission to attend conventions with no good reason being given why it was refused. In 1961, 43 positions were reclassified with salaries raised, but his was not. He felt this was unjustified and noted all the extra maintenance duties he had performed during the 13 years he had been employed.

Mr. Price objected to the grandfather concept in the career ladder which he felt benefitted mostly blacks with little experience. He said he had been a black state employee for many years, and the concept had not benefitted him.

Mr. Price mentioned the increase in personnel at the center but noted his department had not received additional employees. He has had 180 boys under his supervision all by himself. He gave examples of how he managed then and of the athletic activities he arranged for them. He expressed regret that the athletic program has been cut as he felt these activities helped residents work off excess energy and relieve boredom.

Mr. Price said communication was bad at the center. He gave an example of the impossibility of scheduling athletic events because of the uncertainty of what the cottage parents would be requiring of the residents. He thought the level drop system was poor. Program consists only of gym and canteen. He felt the SRS generally does a good job, but a monitoring group should be established to update the needs of the institution. Information needed by employees should be easier to obtain.

Mr. Price displayed a number of exhibits concerning his past programs and achievements. He presented lists from three residents who gave their opinions of the good aspects of the Youth Center at Topeka and made recommendations for improvement (Attachment A).

Mr. Price was questioned as to the chain of command at the center. He was not certain who held these offices.

In answer to questions, Mr. Price said there was a lot of idle time for residents. He felt this was augmented by lack of cooperation from the cottage parents who sometimes did not follow the time schedules. With respect to seclusion, Mr. Price explained the point system and boys receiving lower levels for misbehavior and being assigned to one of the five security cottages. He pointed out, by putting boys in seclusion, they were not able to participate in program. In his opinion, there will have to be either an institution for violent offenders or for those who are non-violent.

Mrs. Grabauskas stated she had a 23-year old son who had been at KNI and Topeka State Hospital and was now at Larned State Hospital. She outlined events prior to his admittance there one and one-half years ago. When he left Topeka State Hospital, he was heavily medicated, dirty, smelly, and had been in seclusion one year. On visits to him, he would be in ragged pajamas or would have nothing on at all. She told of an incident where a wardrobe of clothes she bought for him was taken from a locked cabinet. The aide said another patient stole them, but neither her son or other patients had a key. She said she had picked vomit from his hair and had seen feces under his fingernails. She had seen a tray of food with bugs on it. The food was terrible, and her son lost 30 pounds. Because of reaction to medicine or too much of it, his hands were clawlike and his tongue was swollen. Patients are supposed to be removed from seclusion every four hours, but this was not done with her son. She described the seclusion facilities and noted there was no way a patient could receive assistance to go to the bathroom except by calling through two locked doors. As a consequence, her son would use the room. There was supposed to be a male aide available to take the boy to the bathroom, but usually none were on duty. Mrs. Grabauskas said she had no complaints about employees except there were not enough of them. She noted that good, conscientious men do not stay. While her son was in seclusion, he learned from aides how to fight and hit people so it would not show.

In giving background information regarding her son, Mrs. Grabauskas stated he had been denied access to Topeka public schools at the age of sixteen because he was too disruptive. He was taken to KNI because she was told she could not take care of him because of her broken home situation. While at KNI, he became unable to talk. He was given large doses of thorazine to keep him from running away. In an effort to get him off medicine, he experienced a complete breakdown and was taken to the Topeka State Hospital.

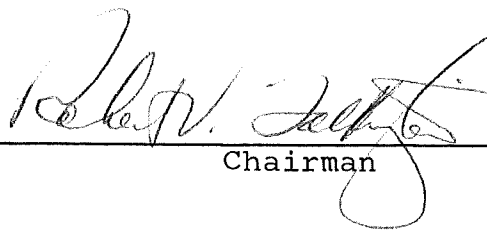
Mrs. Grabauskas said she contacted the patients' rights group in order to get something done about her son. Dr. Haines thought he should go to Larned, and the patients' rights people drove her to Larned to visit the institution. She noted the different attitude there than her son had known before. In the year and one-half he has been at Larned, he has gained weight, learned to cook, calls her, learned to manage money, goes to school and church, swims, orders out of catalogs, and paints. She feels hopeful for the first time.

Mrs. Grabauskas said Topeka State Hospital needs a thorough investigation, and she was not alone in her opinion of the problems there. The money spent there has been used in the wrong places. More "little" people instead of "big" people are needed. She also thought it was difficult for foreign doctors to deal effectively with patients. In her opinion, a pharmacist would be an asset to keep tabs on medication. She pointed out her son was mismanaged which cost the state thousands of dollars and messed up his life. Her daughter-in-law is a nurse at TSH and has said adolescent patients do not go to school regularly although school is available. She felt all they did was receive a little group therapy, mill around, and smoke. Mrs. Grabauskas herself had seen a bottle of whiskey passed around a table and medicine pocketed.

Mrs. Grabauskas said it would be helpful if some sort of transportation plan could be developed so parents living a distance from Larned could visit there more often. She did not know if there were parents from Topeka needing this transportation since she was told that giving out this information would be an infringement on the rights of the persons involved. Another recommendation was a suggestion that patients who have been released and find employment need some sort of program to help them maintain their places in society so they will not regress and have to return to an institution.

In further discussion, Mrs. Grabauskas said her son has never been classified as being mentally retarded or mentally incompetent. She was told by the Larned people that if he was found to be mentally incompetent, he would remain at Larned and would not be placed in an institution with hardened residents. At Topeka, there is no attempt at program for people with problems similar to her son's whereas Larned does have a program.

The meeting adjourned at 1:30 p.m.


Chairman

ATTENDANCE SHEET
FEB. 20, 1980

NAME

REPRESENTATIVE

TOWN

Heigh Anne Porcher

St. Joseph Gazette

St. Joseph, Mo

Max Baker

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Jewers

Kelley

Pulliamrd

Epps

Tommy Smith

Budget

Hamm

Preston Barton

Cameron

STUDENT I ATTACHMENT A

I. GOOD OBJECTIVES

- ① THE STUDENTS ARE ENABLED TO LEARN TO DEAL WITH THEIR PROBLEMS AT HOME & BETWEEN THEMSELVES
- ② STUDENTS ARE ABLE TO GET AN EDUCATION & THEY MAY TAKE THE GED.
- ③ STUDENTS ARE FED GOOD & GET GOOD MEDICAL TREATMENT
- ④ STUDENTS LEARN TO FACE THEIR PROB. & ARE TAUGHT TO HANDLE THEM IN THE RIGHT MANNER
- ⑤ STUDENTS GET A CHANCE AT LEARNING TO INTERMIX RACIALLY WITH EACH OTHER.
- ⑥ STUDENTS LEARN TO RUN EQUIPMENT & LEARN COURSE OF VOCATIONAL TRAINING.
- ⑦ STUDENTS ARE ABLE TO GO OUT FOR SPORTS SO THEY MAY LEARN GOOD SPORTSMANSHIP & LEARN TO FOLLOW INSTRUCTIONS
- ⑧ STUDENTS ARE ABLE TO GO ON PASS WHEN ELIGIBLE INSTEAD OF STAYING HERE UNTIL YOU ARE READY FOR PAROLE
- ⑨ STUDENTS ARE ABLE TO TALK W/ STAFF MEMBERS TO ENCOURAGE THE STUDENTS & TO HELP STUDENT W/ HIS PROBLEMS
- ⑩ STUDENTS ARE FREE TO ATTEND CHURCH & MAY HAVE TIME TO PRAY & STUDY THE BIBLE, WHICH HELPS MOST PEOPLE.

II BAD OBJECTIVES

- ① THE YOUTH CENTER DOES NOT HAVE THE SPECIAL CARE & TIME IN WHICH SOME STUDENTS NEED TO HELP THEM GET STARTED. WHICH CAUSES MORE OF THE EX-STUDENTS TO GO BAD THAN THE ONE WHO GO GOOD.
- ② SOME STAFF DONT CARE WHAT HAPPENS TO STUDENTS.
- ③ WHEN HE GETS TO LEVEL 4, STUDENTS HAVE TO BE ON A SPECIAL CONTRACT WHETHER OR NOT HE NEEDS ONE. (STAFF CAN & WILL USE THESE CONTRACTS AGAINST STUDENTS).
- ④ STUDENTS MUST BE ON CERTAIN LEVELS TO PLAY SPORTS OFF CAMPUS, AND TO GO ON CERTAIN PASSES WHICH I BELIEVE THAT A STUDENT SHOULD BE TREATED THE SAME AS THE NEXT.
- ⑤ THE PLACE IS TOO OLD & THE RULES MAKE IT TO WHERE YOU ARE NOT FREE TO ACT AS THE PEOPLE IN YOUR AGE GRPS ACT.
- ⑥ THE SYSTEM IS SET UP TO HELP THE STAFF MEMBERS MORE THAN THE STUDENTS.
- ⑦ IF YOU WIN AN APPEAL THEY CAN FINE YOU FOR SOMETHING ELSE. (SOME STAFF DO HOLD GRUDGES).
- ⑧ THE SMALLER THE PERSON THE HARDER IT IS TO MAKE IT BECAUSE THE STUDENTS BEHAVE AS IF THE BIG RUN THE PLACE.
- ⑨ NOT ENOUGH ACTIVITIES TO KEEP STUDENTS IN CONSTRUCTIVE TYPE OF LIVING.
- ⑩ THE SCHOOL IS SET UP TO EASY FOR THE HIGHER GRADE STUDENTS TO REALLY LEARN ANYTHING, BECAUSE THEY DONT HAVE TO IN ORDER TO PASS.

STUDENT II

I GOOD OBJECTIVES

- ① GIVES STUDENTS OPPORTUNITY TO FURTHER THEIR EDUCATION.
- ② GIVES STUDENTS LAST CHANCE TO BECOME SOMETHING.
- ③ GIVES STUDENTS BLACK & WHITE A CHANCE TO SEE THAT ALL ARE THE SAME.
- ④ GIVES STUDENTS A CHANCE TO SEE WHAT THEY CAN DO IN SPORTS.
- ⑤ YCAT CAN SOMETHINGS PLACE STUDENT IN PLACES WHICH WOULD BE HARD FROM THE STREETS.
- ⑥ GIVES STUDENTS A CHANCE TO TALK WITH ADULTS & LEARN TOGET ALONG WITH THEM.
- ⑦ GIVES STUDENTS A CHANCE TO SEE THAT THEY CAN MAKE IT WITHOUT DRUGS OR DRINKING.
- ⑧ GIVES STUDENTS A CHANCE TO SEE WHAT THEIR FRIENDS ON THE STREETS MIGHT REALLY BELIKE.
- ⑨ GIVES STUDENTS A CHANCE TO COMMUNICATE WITH PARENTS BUT NOT HAVE TO LIVE WITH THEM.
- ⑩ GIVES MANY STUDENTS THEIR FIRST REAL PROFESSIONAL HELP.

II BAD OBJECTIVES

- ① BAD COMMUNICATION WITH STAFF.
- ② DOESN'T GIVE STUDENTS ENOUGH RESPONSIBILITY.
- ③ NOT ENOUGH STAFF-STUDENT ACTIVITIES
- ④ BUDGET NOT DIVIDED RIGHT TO DO WHAT IT WAS SENT FOR.
- ⑤ TO MANY STAFF SUPERVISORS THAT AREN'T DOING THEIR JOB PROPERLY OR TO THE BEST OF THEIR ABILITY.
- ⑥ TO MANY ROLES MADE FOR BOTH STAFF & STUDENTS BUT NOT CARRIED OUT BY BOTH.
- ⑦ STAFF STICKING UP FOR OTHER STAFF EVEN WHEN THEY KNOW THAT THE FIRST IS WRONG.
- ⑧ NOT ENOUGH DISCIPLINE FOR LOW LEVELS TO MAKE THEM WANT TO MOVE UP.
- ⑨ NOT ENOUGH POWER IN STUDENT ADVISORY.
- ⑩ NOT LETTING INSPECTORS SEE WHAT ITS REALLY LIKE.

STUDENT III

I GOOD OBJECTIVES

- ① VOCATIONAL CLASSES TO HELP PEOPLE GET INTERESTED & FIND A JOB.
- ② SOME STAFF TEACH STUDENTS THE GOOD WAY TO INTERACT IN SOCIETY.
- ③ EASIER TO RELATE TO YOUNG STAFF WHO HAVE NOT BEEN AWAY FROM THE STREETS LONG.
- ④ CANTEEN & GYM SO YOU HAVE SOMETHING TO DO AT NIGHT. THERE SHOULD BE MORE OFF CAMPUS ACTIVITIES.
- ⑤ TEACH DISCIPLINE TO HELP YOU MAKE SOMETHING OF YOURSELF.
- ⑥ COUNSELOR HELPS YOU EXPLORE JOB FIELDS THAT YOU'RE INTERESTED IN.
- ⑦ STUDENT ADVISORY WHERE YOU CAN BRING YOUR COMPLAINTS.
- ⑧ GOOD MEDICAL & DENTAL CARE.
- ⑨ PSYCHIATRIST THAT YOU CAN TELL THINGS TO & THEY WON'T LEAK OUT.
- ⑩ RELIGIOUS PROG. FOR THOSE WHO HAVE FOUND PEACE IN THEIR RELIGIOUS BELIEFS.

II BAD OBJECTIVES

- ① THE LEVEL SYSTEM DOESN'T ALWAYS TELL HOW A STUDENT'S DOING, SOME LOW LEVELS ACT BETTER THAN HIGH LEVELS.
- ② NOT ENOUGH INTERACTION IN THE COMMUNITY; WE SHOULD GET OUT THERE & TRY TO SHOW PEOPLE WE ARE NORMAL & GET INVOLVED.
- ③ PASSES EVERY WEEK SO THAT WE CAN GET USED TO BEING OUT THERE.
- ④ HEAD COTTAGE PARENTS HAVE TOO MUCH CONTROL; WHEN THEY DO SOMETHING IT SHOULD BE APPROVED BY PEOPLE FROM OUTSIDE THE COTTAGE.
- ⑤ NOT ENOUGH STAFF LISTEN TO STUDENTS - BECAUSE THEY ARE AFRAID OF BEING CONNED.
- ⑥ A LOT OF STAFF ARE UNTRAINED AND ARE A BAD INFLUENCE ON THE BOYS.
- ⑦ FOOD THEY SERVE IS PRETTY BAD. (THEY SERVE FOOD PEOPLE DON'T LIKE)
- ⑧ NOT ENOUGH MONEY; THIS PLACE NEEDS MONEY TO WORK WITH.
- ⑨ THE KEEPING OF PEOPLE 1/2, 2, & 3 YRS IS UNNECESSARY. IF THEY HAVEN'T COME THROUGH BY THEN THEY NEVER WILL.
- ⑩ TO MANY RULES THAT ARE UNNECESSARY. I KNOW THERE HAS TO BE SOME BUT THERE ARE FAR TOO MANY.