

**OKLAHOMA COMMISSION ON CHILDREN AND YOUTH
OFFICE OF JUVENILE SYSTEM OVERSIGHT**

May 28, 2008

Sheriff John Whetsel
Oklahoma County Sheriff's Office
201 North Shartel, County Jail Building
Oklahoma City, Oklahoma 73102

Dear Sheriff Whetsel:

On September 18, 2007, the Office of Juvenile System Oversight (OJSO) received a complaint alleging that juveniles housed in the Oklahoma County jail were not receiving educational services. The OJSO began a complaint investigation at the jail on October 18 and returned on October 23 and 25, 2008, to resume the investigation. The OJSO completed its complaint investigation on November 1, 2007. At the time of the OJSO investigation, forty-nine juveniles were housed at the jail.

During the investigation, the OJSO reviewed the education program at the Oklahoma County jail. From the initial interviews with staff and juveniles, the OJSO determined that juveniles housed at the Oklahoma County jail were not afforded appropriate education opportunities on a consistent basis. Staff reported that juveniles housed on the segregation unit, juveniles who were fourteen and fifteen years of age, and female juveniles were not allowed to attend class. Staff also reported that the only juveniles allowed to attend class were those who were sixteen and seventeen years of age.

On February 5, 2008, the OJSO was advised that the Oklahoma County jail had reached an agreement with the Oklahoma City Public School System to provide all educational services to juveniles housed at the Oklahoma County jail. It is the OJSO's understanding that the new agreement states:

- All juveniles will be allowed to attend class, unless the juvenile poses a discipline problem.
- All juveniles will receive either high school course instruction or GED services. The determining factor will be based on the number of class credits the juvenile has completed prior to entering the jail; age or gender will not be a determining factor as to whether the juvenile receives high school course instruction or GED services.
- All juveniles will receive an education survey when he or she enters the jail and will be allowed to state whether he or she wants to receive classroom instruction or attend GED classes.
- The instructors at the jail will have access to the individualized education programs (IEPs) of students who are identified as needing special education services.

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The OJSO finds that this agreement meets the Oklahoma County jail's requirement to provide education services to juveniles who are housed at the jail. With the issuance of this letter, the OJSO investigation will be closed. A written response is not required.

Sincerely,

Dana S. Holden
Oversight Specialist

DH:js

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