

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

Name and Location of Facility: Oklahoma School for the Blind
Muskogee, Oklahoma

Date of Visit: May 17, 2006

Oversight Reviewer: Sara Vincent-Spain, Oversight Specialist

Focus of Visit: Unannounced Oversight Visit

Date: September 20, 2006

General Information

The Office of Juvenile System Oversight (OJSO) conducted a routine, unannounced visit on May 17, 2006, to the Oklahoma School for the Blind (OSB), also known as Parkview School. The purpose of the visit was to assess compliance with established responsibilities and facility policy and procedures. The OSB is a special school operated by the Department of Rehabilitation Services (DRS). On the day of the OJSO visit, there were ninety-six students. Forty-six of the students resided at the school during the week.

Persons Interviewed

- Entry interview and exit conference with the Superintendent
- Two direct care staff members
- Five students (three residential and two day students)
- Informal visits with staff of the Student Health Center, the Dean of Students, the secondary school principal, and the food manager

Documentation Reviewed

- Five students' immunization records and tuberculin test results
- Personnel files, training records, and tuberculin test results for three direct care staff members
- Office of the Oklahoma State Fire Marshal's inspection report, dated January 17, 2006
- Oklahoma State Department of Health's inspection report, dated September 15, 2005

Areas Toured

- Girls' dormitories (A-2 and A-3)
- Boys' dormitories (B-2 and B-3)
- Independent living dormitory (Lowrey Hall)
- Dining room and kitchen
- Common areas

Overview

The OSB is not subject to the residential child care licensing standards implemented by the Division of Child Care of the Department of Human Services that are applicable to other children's residential programs in the state. The OJSO generally reviewed the OSB for established responsibilities, in addition to the school handbooks and DRS policy.

Interviews

The OJSO interviewed three residential students and two day students, ranging in ages from eight to nineteen. Overall, the interviewees reported positive comments regarding the school, dormitory life, and the staff. One interviewee stated that some students were "picked on" by other students and that a staff member was using profanity with the students. The comment was directed to the Superintendent in the exit conference.

Two direct care staff members were interviewed. Both:

- demonstrated familiarity with appropriate procedures;
- stated they had not restrained any of the residents;
- expressed their desire to provide care to the residents; and
- stated the homelike environment was the most beneficial aspect of the program.

A nursing staff member of the Student Health Center was interviewed. The nurse stated that tuberculin testing and immunizations were current for all the students. No issues of concern were noted from the staff interviews.

File Reviews

The personnel files and training records for three direct care staff members were reviewed. Two files lacked documentation of orientation training for the employees, and one file did not contain a criminal record background report on the employee.

Observational Tour

On the day of the OJSO visit, the dormitories were clean and aesthetically decorated and furnished. The kitchen was clean and food was properly stored. The kitchen

manager demonstrated knowledge of the nutritional requirements for youth and reported that she had attended training on food service/preparation.

Summary

On the day of the OJSO visit, the facility conducted a rehearsal for the graduation of seventeen students, the largest class of graduates in the school's history. Also on that day, the facility received donations of a computer from Wal-Mart and a \$68 gift card from Frito-Lay.

In the exit conference, the OJSO and the Superintendent discussed:

- A verbal report of some students "picking on" other students and a staff member using profanity when speaking to the students. The Superintendent advised the OJSO that the complaints would be investigated.

Finding

1. A criminal record background report was not obtained on an employee whose file was reviewed. Department of Rehabilitative Services policy OAC 612:20-3-39, Felony record search, (a)-(c), states, "The Oklahoma School for the Blind . . . policy requires a felony record search for the recommended applicant for employment including a search of local law enforcement records maintained pursuant to the Sex Offenders Registration Act. [The] school may also require a national felony record search based upon fingerprints. The cost of the searches will be paid by the school. An individual may be employed not to exceed sixty (60) calendar days pending receipt of the results of the search. The Superintendent shall review the background information and make the determination whether employment should be continued or terminated. All information contained on and generated from this application and fingerprint cards is to be confidential and used only for professional purposes. Results of the searches will remain in the permanent property of the school. All applicants for employment at the Oklahoma School for the Blind . . . shall be notified of this requirement."

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