

2022 McLean County Juvenile Detention Center Inspection Report

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Executive Summary

The Department of Juvenile Justice conducted an annual inspection of the McLean County Juvenile Detention Center on September 1, 2022, pursuant to 730 ILCS 5/3-15-2(b). While there were several areas of strength observed, there were a few areas of non-compliance noted with the sections and specific requirements of the 20 Ill. Adm. Code 2602 County Juvenile Detention Standards (“County Detention Standards”).

Areas of Non-Compliance

Section	Requirement
2602.230 Education	A detention facility shall operate a 12-month long schedule of school instruction and programming with appropriately certified teachers that are licensed by the State Board of Education. There shall be a minimum of five hours of instruction per day.”
2602.50 Admissions Procedures	Within 72 hours after the youth’s arrival at the facility and periodically throughout a youth’s confinement, the agency shall obtain and use information about each youth’s personal history and behavior to reduce the risk of sexual abuse by or upon a resident. Assessments shall be conducted using an objective screening instrument.

Methodology

- Interviews Conducted
 - Superintendent
 - Assistant Superintendent
 - Program Coordinator
 - Mental Health Practitioner
 - 2 Detention Officers
 - Nurse
 - 7 youth

- Documents Reviewed
 - Sample Youth Files
 - Sample Medical Files
 - Programming Schedule
 - Recreation Schedule
 - Professional Staff Credentials
 - Grievance Policy
 - Dietary Menus with Caloric Counts
 - Resident Handbook
 - Therapist Contract

Overview

The McLean County Juvenile Detention Center is a 26-bed facility located in Normal, Illinois. The facility has a main common area with three primary living units. An outdoor recreation space, gymnasium and large classroom are easily accessible from the main common area. The physical plant was in good condition, clean, and had a lot of natural lighting.

Admission Policy and Procedures, Prison Rape Elimination Act

The facility conducts youth intakes 24-hours a day. Youth personal items are collected and stored according to standards. All youth receive a Resident Handbook that includes an overview of resident rights, behavior program information, and a small section describing the Prison Rape Elimination Act (PREA). Recent updates to County Detention Standards include the addition of several PREA-related conditions. The facility has an identified PREA Coordinator and was taking steps to work towards PREA compliance prior to the COVID-19 pandemic. There are some portions the facility has yet to implement, such as screening all youth for risk for victimization and providing youth access to a neutral third party to make sexual abuse and harassment allegations. Despite having a small portion of the Youth Orientation Manual cover PREA rights, none of the youth were familiar with PREA during interviews. The facility does have a plan to implement the risk for victimization assessment and enhancements to facility video cameras in coming months.

Areas of Noncompliance and Recommendations

- 2602.50 Admissions Procedures states: “Within 72 hours after the youth’s arrival at the facility and periodically throughout a youth’s confinement, the agency shall obtain and use information about each youth’s personal history and behavior to reduce the risk of sexual abuse by or upon a resident. Assessments shall be conducted using an objective screening instrument.”
 - Recommendations:
 - Implement the PREA Risk for Victimization Assessment for youth within 72 hours of admission and periodically throughout a youth’s confinement.
 - Implement a formal PREA Orientation for all youth.
 - Contract with a neutral third party to provide access for youth reports of sexual abuse and harassment.

Personnel, Staffing and Supervision

The facility administration reported that the first time in several years, the facility was fully staffed. Like other county facilities, the McLean County Juvenile Detention Center experienced staffing shortages during the return to work following the COVID-19 pandemic in early 2021. Several staff left for other positions, and the facility struggled to hire new staff to replace those lost. The facility administration responded to staff shortages by effectively managing staff throughout the facility, by maintaining staff levels in the facility to maximize security and to keep essential programming operating. However, it was noted that some facility operations were impacted because of staffing levels, such as programming and visitation. For example, youth are offered the opportunity to receive visits from family members daily

from 4:30pm to 6pm. During this time, those youth who are not receiving a visit are held in their rooms for “quiet time.” This room confinement is to accommodate for the shifting of staff to supervise visitation.

In total, the facility employs 15 Detention Counselors, and the number of residents range from 13 to 15 on a particular month. The facility administration reported that 10 youth seems to be an ideal number because of space and staffing limitations. During the and morning shift there are 4 staff assigned. During the evening shift, approximately 4-5 staff are staffed at the facility. Because of daily fluctuations in staffing, such as when staff ask for time off, sometimes administrative staff may be pulled to cover line staff duties.

Detention Programs, Youth Discipline, and Confinement

The facility utilizes a “no fail” behavioral management system, where each day, youth start at the highest behavioral level, “A”, and during the day they may be placed on a lower level based on their behavior. If they remain on “A” level until the end of the day, the youth can earn privileges in the facility if they earn consecutive “A” s. For example, a youth can choose not to participate in group programming once a week after accruing 30 consecutive “A’s.” Levels also impact when a youth goes to bed in the evening, with lower behavioral levels equating to earlier bedtimes.

If a youth engages in disruptive behavior during the day, their level is lowered to a “B” level. If the youth retains their “B” for the rest of the day, they start the next day with an “A.” Youth on “B” level who engages in further disruptive behavior are lowered to level “C,” which can also entail placement on a special Security Status. Use of this status is not very frequent, as it was only utilized three times in June of 2022 and only once in May 2022 for instance. One youth was on this status during the review. That youth was out in his dayroom and still had access to regular programming.

Interviewed youth reported that the policies concerning behavioral levels were “fair,” and that staff were also fair in the implementation of the behavioral management system. Despite the seemingly lengthy requirement of consecutive days at “A” level in order to receive privileges, youth reported that the privileges were motivating, and that achieving consecutive “A’s” is doable at this facility.

The facility has a robust programming schedule, with programming delivered both internally and via external partnerships. The facility employs a Program Coordinator who maintains a programming calendar. While the Program Coordinator does cover shifts for employee absences, she continues to maintain daily programs for youth. The day prior, for instance, the program coordinator facilitated a group on community services. She has also engaged with the McLean County Health Department to provide a course on vaping, tobacco, STIs, and nutrition once per month, a weekly music group, and physics-based activities conducted by local college students. The program coordinator tracks youth attendance at all programming activities. The volume and consistency of daily programming is a strength of the facility. Youth were very knowledgeable of the daily schedule, reported they felt safe, and have positive relationships with employees of the facility.

While the facility is in compliance with the portion of the County Detention Standards, some policies have yet to be updated to reflect changes in standards and current facility practice.

Recommendations:

- Revise Policy 15.1 “Rules and Discipline” to reflect changes in standards and current practice.
- Revise the Resident Handbook to reflect changes in standards and current practice.

Medical and Health Care

There is a full-time nurse that works at the facility with an office just off the main dayroom of the facility. All youth receive a physical within seven days of admission. A physician, who is contracted through Advanced Correctional Healthcare, is on-call 24-hours per day and on-site approximately once per week. There is an active process to ensure youth medication continues when they are admitted, with the nurse verifying prescriptions with parents and prescribing doctors. The facility nurse manages medication distribution when she is on-site, otherwise it is managed by supervisory staff. Medications were stored appropriately.

Mental Health Services

A Licensed Clinical Social Worker (LCSW) has been on contract since 1999. Currently, she provides approximately 10 hours of services per week, most of which are individual, 1:1 services. The contract also permits continuing to provide services to youth post-release. This has not been utilized frequently; however, it is beneficial to have space in the contract to provide a continuity of services to youth. The LCSW typically sees youth who are assessed as a suicide risk upon intake and youth who request to be seen. Most interventions are focused on development of tools to address trauma and cope with acute life stressors. She has not been developing formal services plans for youth but has started to do so since the time of the audit.

Education

The facility has one teacher to provide educational services. She is an employee of the Regional Office of Education (ROE). Youth at the facility are enrolled through the Normal Illinois School District (Unit 5).

School was in session during the facility walkthrough, with the teacher providing direct instruction to youth. Youth were split between two groups, with each group attending school for 1.75 hours each. The youth who were not in class spent time in the facility gym and engaged in alternative programming. School was not offered to youth in the afternoon. The educator reported the ROE changed the teaching hours to 30 hours per week for this school year and afternoons are spent doing administrative tasks. School does not run year around at the facility. In years past, the educator has conducted three weeks of summer school, however no summer school was offered in 2022 due to budget cuts.

Youth at the facility were very complimentary of the education program, but it is clear both the school calendar and number of hours youth participate in educational services are out of compliance with County Detention Standards.

Areas of Noncompliance and Recommendations

- 2602.230 Education states: “A detention facility shall operate a 12-month long schedule of school instruction and programming with appropriately certified teachers that are licensed by the State Board of Education. There shall be a minimum of five hours of instruction per day.”
 - Recommendations:
 - Implement a 12-month long schedule of school instruction.
 - Increase the number of teaching hours offered per week to ensure youth have access to five hours of instruction per day.

Recommendations

Section	Recommendations
Admissions Policies and Procedures	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Implement the PREA Risk for Victimization Assessment for youth within 72 hours of admission and periodically throughout a youth’s confinement.• Implement a formal PREA Orientation for all youth.• Contract with a neutral third party to provide access for youth reports of sexual abuse and harassment.
Discipline	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Revise Policy 15.1 “Rules and Discipline” to reflect changes in standards and current practice.• Revise the Resident Handbook to reflect changes in standards and current practice.
Education	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Implement a 12-month long schedule of school instruction.• Increase the number of teaching hours offered per week to ensure youth have access to five hours of instruction per day.