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Terri Williams, Acting Commissioner

Juvenile Justice Authority

Sam Brownback, Governor

DATE: October 9, 2012
TO: Joint Committee on Legislative Budget
FROM: Terri Williams, Acting Commissioner
Juvenile Justice Authority 
RE: Written Testimony - Update on the LPA Performance Audit
Juvenile Justice Authority: Evaluating the Kansas Juvenile Correctional Complex, Part I

My name is Terri Williams and I am the Acting Commissioner for the Juvenile Justice Authority (JJA), a position I have held since March 30, 2012.

When I became Acting Commissioner, I found a number of critical issues in the agency, many of which are listed in the audit report and that have been problematic for years. For example:

- Policy Development
- Training and Staff Development
- High Turnover
- Discipline and Human Resource Issues
- Leadership
- Security

The issues are complex, widespread and reflect a long standing culture which is inconsistent with that of a healthy organization and out of synch with what is considered "best practices" of juvenile corrections agencies.

My testimony before the Legislative Post Audit (LPA) Committee on July 10, 2012 reflected these deficiencies and the steps taken at that time to begin addressing these complex problems. On that date, JJA readily agreed to provide monthly updates to the Legislative Post Audit Committee via a written progress report submitted to Mr. Scott Frank, LPA. Upon discussion with Mr. Frank, we were asked to begin submitting monthly reports in September 2012.

It is my understanding that this committee is interested in hearing a synopsis of the updates and I am pleased to provide them to you today and answer any questions you may have about them.

While many positive steps have been taken, they are by no means exhaustive. Some of the specific progress is noted below:

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Training

We have completely overhauled JJA's training department. We have tapped into the expertise of the Training Manager of the Kansas Department of Corrections and transferred the former JJA Training Manager position to the Larned Juvenile Correctional Facility (LJCF), which didn't have a dedicated training staff member. The remaining two trainers were relocated from Central Office to KJCC.

Much work has been done to establish a strong staff development and training foundation (policy, staff, process). For FY13 the focus will be on Basic Security Practices and meeting the training requirements.

Some of the accomplishments in Staff Development and Training include:

- Reorganized the Staff Development Unit and shifted resources to facilities
- Revised the training and staff development policy
- Developed a clear matrix of training requirements for all staff, contract staff, volunteers, etc.
- Selected a Learning Management System (LMS) to comprehensively and accurately document training
- Begun to build out the LMS and entering training that has occurred for FY13
- Outlined process to determine annual training needs
- Established a statewide Basic Security Work Group (training and operational staff) to make recommendations on training issues
- The Basic Security Work Group meets every two weeks to develop the final Basic Security Practices curricula (target completion date of 12/31/12), which will consist of 7 modules:
 - Security is an Attitude - Everyone is Responsible for Security
 - Pat Searches and Facility Searches
 - Entry Point Procedures
 - Key and Tool Control
 - Crime Scene Preservation Refresher
 - Direct Supervision
 - Summary – Putting it All Together Activity

This Basic Security training will be rolled out at KJCC in January 2013 and at LJCF in February 2013.

- All juvenile corrections officers and direct care staff at KJCC have been trained in crime scene preservation with the exception of staff on extended military/sick leave.
- Staff members are currently being trained on the Prison Rape Elimination Act (PREA) by our PREA Coordinator with 108 receiving the training so far. The training will be completed at LJCF by the end of October 2012 and at KJCC by 12/31/12.

Policies

We have instituted a policy process requiring policies be reviewed and updated annually with prioritization of critical operational policies. A number of the policies at the agency still bear the

signature of the original JJA Commissioner. A number of policies have been finalized and others are near completion and we are streamlining/eliminating facility orders.

All of the policies recommended in the LPA report have been completed (one is in final draft form). These include:

- Overhaul and consolidation of Search and Contraband Control Policy (consolidating 3 separate policies governing searches)
- Revision and consolidation of Investigation Policy and Crimes Committed at Facility Policy
- Revision and consolidation of Sexual Assault Prevention and Intervention Policy and Reporting Abuse and/or Neglect Policy
- Establishment of a Tool Control Policy
- Establishment of a Crime Scene, Contraband, and Physical Evidence Preservation Policy
- Revision of Critical Incident Reporting Policy
- Revision of Policy and Procedure Development Policy
- Revision of Separation from Employment Policy
- Revision of Recruitment and Selection Process Policy
- Overhaul of the Staff Development and Training Policy

HR Issues

I can report to the committee that I personally completed spot checks prior to the release of the LPA audit in July 2012 and found the HR files at KJCC to be in poor shape and missing documentation. This finding is consistent with the LPA report.

Some of the progress made in the HR arena includes:

- Remedied starting salary disparity between JJA's Juvenile Corrections Officer I positions and their KDOC counterparts via Executive Directive.
- Increased shift differential to that paid by KDOC
- Updated policy to address documentation of authorization of hiring exceptions
- Updated policy to requiring appropriate clearances
- Department of Administration allocated additional resources to improve the organization of files
- Developed and implemented a statewide HR hiring checklist to improve the clearance (and documentation) process
- Implementing revised HR Database to increase oversight, accountability and consistency – progress ongoing
- Delinquent background and Drivers Licenses checks completed
- The JCO series was included in the Under-market Pay Initiative, which was approved by the State Finance Council and will ensure continued parity of pay with KDOC.
- Requested assistance from Department of Administration to focus on increased recruitment initiatives at KJCC.

With all the work done on establishing pay parity with KDOC, recruitment and retention rates should improve. With establishing a mechanism of accountability (both of individual staff as well as our own agency's practices) we have seen some necessary vacancies and forced overtime is higher than optimal. We are working on that by holding more basic training classes, and (as noted above) collaborating with D of A for assistance on recruitment. I have communicated to the Teamsters Union representatives (and participated in a recent facility meeting) our recognition of need to improve this and shared our plan for addressing it.

I have checked the HR files since and have seen great improvement. As recent as 10/2/12, I came to the facility and asked for the files of the new recruit class. The files and documents were quickly produced and all the required background checks, drivers' license checks and drug screens were in the files and the clearances were granted prior to the individuals' start dates.

Security Issues

One of the issues I have heard debated a number of times during my brief tenure is whether the agency has a focus of rehabilitation or security. In the best of circumstances, both exist simultaneously.

However, KJCC is a correctional facility. We have people incarcerated who have committed serious offenses. Before any programs can be effective, the environment must be one where individuals feel safe.

Prior to my arrival at JJA, Governor Brownback enlisted the help of Ray Roberts, Secretary of Corrections, to review operations at KJCC and make recommendations regarding ways to improve the facility operations. We have been implementing a number of the recommendations as well as some enhancements, including the topics listed below:

- Improved supervisory coverage
- Review and modification of staffing pattern, including creating posts in high-risk areas (e.g., dining hall)
- Repaired/refashioned doors which had posed safety threats for staff
- Moved to annual post rotation
- Repaired perimeter lighting and conducting regular perimeter checks
- Equipment for increased monitoring authorized for purchase
- Establishment of a multi-departmental quality assurance team
- Increased expectations for rounds checking and interviewing staff and offenders
- Establishment of vulnerability checks and drills
- Establishment of spot checks for rounds-checking
- Requirement for all visitors to comply with entry security (e.g., metal detectors and searches)
- Establishment of a secure evidence room for evidence storage
- Searches (including canine searches and a facility-wide shakedown at KJCC) have been completed in accordance with the revised Search Policy
- Submission of Budget Enhancement for ACA Accreditation application
- Evening and weekend coverage of counseling staff

- Establishing a mechanism to recognize staff who are performing well

Significant progress has been made in developing a stronger foundation of sound correctional practices and policies at JJA/KJCC. I must caution that these are preliminary accomplishments. These challenges didn't happen overnight and they won't be resolved overnight. However, we have some very dedicated staff who are working extremely hard to improve conditions at the facility and to improve public safety. This administration is committed to facilitating the culture changes required to address problems which have been in existence at KJCC for nearly a quarter of a century.

I thank you for your time and for your dedication and interest in the Juvenile Justice Authority. I am happy to answer questions at this time.