



TEXAS
JUVENILE JUSTICE
DEPARTMENT

TRANSFORMING YOUNG LIVES AND CREATING SAFER COMMUNITIES

Statement From Camille Cain on the Houston Chronicle Story Regarding the Gainesville State School

February 20, 2019

AUSTIN—Camille Cain, Executive Director of the Texas Juvenile Justice Department, issued this statement regarding the Houston Chronicle story about the incidents at the Gainesville State School:

“It is wholly inaccurate to describe the events at the Gainesville State School last year with the front-page headline ‘Gangs, lack of guards spark riot for 6 days at Texas juvenile prison.’ There simply was no ongoing six-day riot. To be clear, there were a series of disturbances over the course of several evenings involving youth activating fire alarms in an effort to exit the dorms and cause disruptions. Each time this happened, staff restored order as quickly as possible, and at no time did the actions of the youth threaten to compromise the security of the facility. I do not say this to minimize the seriousness of these events; I do it to set an inaccurate record straight. In fact, the Office of the Independent Ombudsman, who reports directly to the Office of the Governor and the Legislature, never uses the word ‘riot’ in the report that forms the basis of this reporting. The most important lesson from these incidents is the subsequent response by the agency to improve the campus environment and ensure that staff are properly trained to deescalate and better respond to disruptive situations.”

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