



TEXAS JUVENILE JUSTICE DEPARTMENT

TRANSFORMING YOUNG LIVES AND CREATING SAFER COMMUNITIES

Executive Director Camille Cain Announces Changes to Improve the Health and Wellness of Youth

August 1, 2018

AUSTIN—Camille Cain, the Executive Director of the Texas Juvenile Justice Department, announced today that the agency has implemented changes to improve the health and wellness of the youth in its care.

First, she has increased the amount of time the youth spend in their rooms each night to get the proper amount of sleep. “Science tells us that teens need between eight and ten hours of sleep to maximize their mental and physical development,” Cain says. “Our previous schedules allowed the kids to get no more than eight hours of sleep each night—and usually fewer—which meant that many of them felt exhausted.” During the summer, Cain had asked the superintendents of each facility to examine their daily schedules and to dedicate extra hours to getting the youth the proper amount of rest.

Cain has also directed the facilities to provide healthy snacks in the morning and the afternoon and to provide each youth with a personal water bottle to carry throughout the day. The snack program includes fresh fruit, healthy crackers, and low-fat cheese. “This initiative will help spread calories out during the day so that the youth don’t feel hungry between meals,” says Tushar Desai, the Medical Director for TJJD. The youth are also being provided with water bottles to ensure proper hydration instead of relying solely on drinking fountains between meals.

“All of these changes are designed to help the kids be healthy, focused, and engaged,” Cain says. “This is brain science, and we firmly believe in the role that sleep, nutrition, and hydration play in the development of our youth. These changes also set the stage for future initiatives aimed at helping youth learn to regulate their own emotions, responses, and behavior.”

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