



TEXAS
JUVENILE JUSTICE
DEPARTMENT

TRANSFORMING YOUNG LIVES AND CREATING SAFER COMMUNITIES

**Response to the Independent Ombudsman
Fourth Quarter Report, FY 2016
October 17, 2016**

The Texas Juvenile Justice Department (TJJD) has received the FY 16 Fourth Quarter Report from the Office of the Independent Ombudsman (OIO). TJJD appreciates the opportunity to respond.

TJJD notes that there was a decrease in complaints about TJJD youth from 35 in the third quarter involving TJJD youth to 19. TJJD additionally notes that in the Fourth quarter complaints specific to the McLennan County Facility had decreased from 15 to 7, with no complaints on staff conduct, religion, release dates or medical issues in the fourth quarter. As the OIO is aware, the agency has been addressing issues at McLennan County since the last quarter in areas identified by the OIO and by the agency Monitoring and Inspections division. A member of the State Programs and Facilities Performance and Accountability division has been assigned to conduct in depth reviews at McLennan County providing routine feedback to leadership and mid-managers there. While the population at McLennan remains high, additional training for Case management and mid Managers appears to be reaping benefits.

TJJD noted that the only facility having an increase in complaints was Evins with an increase from 3 in the Third Quarter to 4 in the Fourth Quarter. As the OIO is aware, major leadership changes have taken place at the Evins facility over the past few months with TJJD naming a new Superintendent and Assistant Superintendent. Both are tenured agency staff with great experience in operations, security and treatment between them. TJJD is very optimistic about the stabilization of the Evins facility and positive feedback received on the overall student and staff culture since these changes from a number of monitoring groups.

The OIO closed 40 cases in the fourth quarter and TJJD notes that thirteen were closed as founded, up from twelve closed as founded in the third quarter. While not significant, this is an increase in founded cases. TJJD looks forward to our continued monthly meetings where we discuss unresolved issues and issues of significant concern. Since our meeting on Monday, October 10th, TJJD has been able to bring closure to three issues raised in that meeting with work continuing on the others.

As always, TJJD appreciates the opportunity to respond to the OIO and looks forward to sharing updates on these efforts that continue to move the agency effectively forward.