

PUBLIC FEEDBACK REPORT NO. 6

ONE-ON-ONE INTERVIEW WITH A PARENT
REGARDING HER CHILD'S
DELINQUENCY MATTER
OCTOBER 27, 2016

BACKGROUND

DATE/TIME OF MEETING: October 27, 2016, 5:30 pm to 7:00 pm each time

LOCATION: Shelby County Schools, 2485 Union Avenue, Memphis, Tennessee, 38112

CONSORTIUM ATTENDEES: Dorothy Thomas, Freda Williams, Gwendolyn Wright

OTHER NON-PUBLIC ATTENDEES: Stacy Taylor

FACILITATOR: Dorothy Thomas

RECORDER: Notes were taken by individual members and Stacy Taylor. Other identifying names have been changed in the attached report to maintain confidentiality.

MEETING NOTICE DISSEMINATION: All potential participants were contacted by individual Consortium members via telephone.

OVERVIEW

Consortium members attempted to meet with multiple parents of children with delinquency matters pending before the Court. All but one decided not to attend the meeting. She will be referred to as Parent A. In answering the group's questions, Parent A was expressive, thorough and openly candid. Her seventeen (17) year old daughter is currently being detained at Juvenile Court charged with several major infractions, including kidnapping, attempted murder, robbery, and child endangerment/child abuse. Parent A expressed that because of the severity of the charges, the prosecutor resisted any efforts to release her daughter from detention.

Parent A expressed some anger that her daughter's accomplices, one adult female and two males (ages unknown) had all been released while her daughter remained detained. The daughter has a two year old daughter herself, and visits are allowed at the detention facility. Parent A has two other school age children. Parent A receives assistance from her sister who helps tend to her children and granddaughter.

Parent A expressed that the detainees no longer are allowed to attend Hope Academy School (reason(s) unknown), but the school work is brought to them in their cells. Parent A's daughter is doing fairly well, mainly stays to herself partly due to being bullied by other female detainees. With the assistance of the detention personnel, the bullying has since ceased. While the bullying was going on, Parent A's daughter was given a maximum of four (4) hours of recreational time and when that time was up she was placed back in the cell. At this point, the bullies were

Countywide Juvenile Justice Consortium, Shelby County, Tennessee



allowed out of their cells for four (4) hours of recreational time. When asked about her daughter's attitude and diet, Parent A stated they were good for the most part, but she terribly misses her baby and family.

Parent A's daughter will turn eighteen (18) in December and she believes the authorities are holding her until then so that she may be tried as an adult. Parent A also stated that the court was talking about releasing her into the custody of the Department of Children's Services (DCS) possibly until she reaches the age of twenty-one (21). The court also stated that she could be released unto the custody of Jail East. Parent A expressed that she would rather have her child at Juvenile Court than Jail East with all the grown women. She also believes her daughter's safety would be at stake if she's sent to Jail East. Parent A recently fired the Public Defender and hired a private attorney. As a result of her daughter's charges, she lost her home, is strapped for cash, cannot get her granddaughter into daycare because technically she is not the legal guardian, and the list is never-ending.

QUESTIONS AND CONCERNS

Consortium members have met and discussed items brought up at the parent interview meeting, and we have the following concerns:

1. Please advise the Consortium on the manner in which children are permitted to attend Hope Academy. In particular, is it true that a child can be prevented from going to the school and asked to do school work on her own as described above by the parent?
2. Please advise the Consortium on the manner that children are kept in their individual cells/rooms and the manner in which they are permitted free time outside of their rooms. In particular, are children confined and permitted free time as described above by the parent?

RECOMMENDATIONS

1. If the Court is not doing so already, the Consortium would like to recommend that records be kept on all children who either attend Hope Academy or do not, along with the reason for a child not attending school.
2. The Consortium would like the Court to make every effort for all children in detention to attend school.

Countywide Juvenile Justice Consortium, Shelby County, Tennessee



3. The Consortium would like the amount of room confinement time reduced as much as possible with records of how and why a child is placed in room confinement.

Approved:
Countywide Juvenile Justice Consortium
November 2016

Countywide Juvenile Justice Consortium, Shelby County, Tennessee

