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“CHARTING CHANGE”

PROGRESS IN THE ILLINOIS DEPARTMENT OF JUVENILE JUSTICE

IYC WARRENVILLE

MODELS FOR CHANGE INITIATIVE
JOHN D. AND CATHERINE T. MACARTHUR FOUNDATION
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The John Howard Association of Illinois provides critical public oversight of the state's prisons, jails, and juvenile correctional facilities. As it has for more than a century, the Association promotes fair, humane, and effective sentencing and correctional policies, addresses inmate concerns, and provides Illinois citizens and decision-makers with information needed to improve criminal and juvenile justice.

As a partner in the John D. and Catherine T. MacArthur Foundation's Models for Change juvenile justice initiative, the John Howard Association of Illinois has been tasked with observing first hand each of Illinois' eight Youth Centers, the secure correctional facilities operated by Illinois' new Department of Juvenile Justice, and to report on the Department's progress toward reforms consistent with Models for Change goals. Progress will be measured according to "performance measures" proposed for each Youth Center and for the Department overall.

This report describes one Youth Center and the performance measures proposed for it in 2007. The report also describes first steps that have been taken by the new Department of Juvenile Justice to improve conditions and operations, as well as particular obstacles associated with the Youth Center. Collectively, the reports on all eight of Illinois' Youth Centers are intended as a resource for policymakers, advocates, Models for Change partners, the media and the public who seek to understand secure confinement as it exists for youth in Illinois and the challenge of bringing about change in the ways that Illinois now incarcerates troubled youth. Individually and collectively these reports provide a base-line reference for annual updates on the Department's progress at each Youth Center and on periodic reports on issues such as education, staffing, disciplinary practices, reentry or "aftercare" for youth, and the Department's budgetary needs.

This report draws upon the observations of volunteer citizen visitors who through the John Howard Association provide public oversight of prisons, jails, and juvenile corrections facilities. These visits bring people from many walks of life into closed institutions where they can observe activities and conditions and speak with residents and employees.

This report was written by and under the direction of Malcolm C. Young with Patricia Connell and with contributions from John Howard Association of Illinois staff members Charles A. Fasano and Jannifer Nevilles.

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CHAPTER THREE: “CHARTING CHANGE”
PROGRESS IN THE ILLINOIS DEPARTMENT OF JUVENILE JUSTICE
IYC MURPHYSBORO

IYC Warrenville

IYC Warrenville is located in suburban DuPage County, only 35 miles west of Chicago, a few miles west of Naperville, and barely a mile by road from the intersection of Interstate 88 and Route 59. It fills about half of 30 acres of flat land on the north side of Ferry Road, a divided highway at this point, seemingly in the midst of corn fields. However, those fields are themselves surrounded by industrial development including several shipping warehouses on either side that are nearly as large as the entire Youth Center compound. The closest green spaces not privately owned are two parks: Big Woods to the west and McDowell Grove Forest Preserve to the east.

IYC Warrenville was originally constructed as a coed correctional facility for youth by Standard Oil in 1973 as part of a land swap arrangement entered into with the state. From outside, the collection of buildings look like a corporate training or retreat center for mid-level managers or sales people. While there is a trace of a corporate tone to the complex of low-lying buildings, on the outside the buildings are dowdy from age and dull paint.

The Youth Center is comprised of: one main building which houses administration including the Superintendent’s office, a room for roll call, an infirmary, the school, library, cafeteria, other shared services and a small enclosed patio or recreation area; an employee and visitor parking lot just east of the main building; a cluster of several detached housing units around a circular walkway north of the main building; several pre-fab or trailered buildings to the northwest of the main building, and several utility buildings. There is a gym, an outdoor playing field, with an oval track, a softball field, outdoor basketball court and a sand volleyball court.

A high wire fence surrounds the compound. Except near the entranceway, there is nothing by way of trees or planting to break the winter wind, summer sun or the sharp angles of the Youth Center’s collection of buildings.

Inside, offices and school rooms appear much as they do in normal high schools. The library is open and there are a large number of books on the shelves. Food is served in a large room that has the atmosphere of a school or YMCA camp lunchroom.

Four separate housing buildings, called “cottages,” are arrayed on three sides of the circular walkway. Three of the “cottages” are identical in design. They are divided into two separate living units housing 12 to 14 girls, with sleeping rooms arrayed around a large open common area. Each of the units houses a different type of population and two of the facility’s treatment programs, FOCUS and Victory each inhabit one of the units. Because of this design the capacity of these two programs is limited by the number of beds. The fourth housing building is called “K” because of its unique shape. Again the building is divided into two equal spaces, but two long corridors run off of each of the common areas. The girls sleeping rooms are located on each side of the corridors. These two units have more sleeping rooms and can

accommodate more girls. The substance abuse treatment unit is located in one half of this building and has a capacity of 30 girls.

Whatever the distribution in the building, each girl's sleeping room is similar. There is a glass window in each room door and each room has a window with security bars that permit fairly normal light. Inside, there are desks, open closets or storage areas. In at least some of the living units there are built in Formica-covered plywood shelves and cabinets, a material not usually seen in Illinois secure facilities.

Most rooms have a view of sorts. Typically, the occupant looks out upon some portion of the flat ground in the compound or toward a corn field. The security fencing is not remarkably visible from inside many of the living units.

IYC Warrenville is rated for a capacity of 108 girls. In May of 2007 there were 94 girls in the Youth Center, although there have been reports of populations in recent months in the low 80's.

Warrenville is classified as having all security levels from maximum security to minimum. Most girls in residence are classified as minimum or medium security. All girls committed to the Department from any county in the state are sent here for reception and classification. They are assigned to a separate twenty bed unit. The classification process takes between 10 days and three weeks, after which a girl will be assigned to one of the general population units, to more specialized substance abuse, mental health, or parenting units at Warrenville, or to IYC Pere Marquette, which also provides substance abuse programs. Pregnant girls stay at Warrenville.

Performance Measures for IYC Warrenville

A. Physical Setting

An artist roams the resident units and common spaces at Warrenville. She has been charged with helping the girls to paint murals, pictures, hopeful and inspirational messages throughout. Many of the paintings are quite creative. They show both youthful expression and a “Grandma Moses” detail of life. Most living units have welcoming colorful pictures on their walls, and in some the doors are painted with individual pictures and some girls have paintings on the walls in their room. Wall paintings come with messages such as: “Never give up,” and “To be Successful, Look Up, Don’t Look Down,” and the “Twelve Steps” to success. Girls have painted murals of famous singers and celebrities in the beauty shop. They painted Disney-theme characters and scenes on the walls of the unit to which pregnant and parenting girls are assigned.

Combined with fresh, light, white and sky-blue walls and a number of framed and posted collections of photographs, book shelves and other decorations, the artwork effectively dispels the institutional aspects of the Youth Center. More, having been created by residents, the artwork affirms the talent, desire for self-expression, and similarities between the girls who are confined here and girls elsewhere.

Of course, it doesn’t hurt one bit that none of the buildings at IYC Warrenville are particularly “hardened,” that security measures are fairly unobtrusive, that there are few heavy bars or thick steel doors. The Youth Center’s original mildly corporate design is much more easily moved toward warmth, color and light than either the older cement and stone prison design at Joliet or the newer Supermax style of construction at Kewanee.

1. IYC Warrenville satisfies a **performance measure** for internal improvements leading toward a child-friendly environment as long as it continues in the direction taken by its current artist in residence. The Department would begin to satisfy a **performance measure** if it engaged people with a similar talent to teach and oversee creative and expressive artwork in other Youth Centers.

2. Repainting walls in common areas in lighter, brighter and varied colors.

*The facility is brighter and more colorful than most Illinois Youth Centers. At the time of our visit in 2007 lighter floor tiles were on hand to replace dull, dark colors as soon as installers can be brought in to lay them. There are still opportunities to add variety and more color, and there is plenty of room for the girls’ continued paintings, but the direction taken at this Youth Center serves as a model for the Department and each of the other facilities. A **performance measure** for the Department is to develop the “artist in residence” program for other Youth Centers patterned after the residence artist program at IYC Warrenville.*

3. Taking steps to improve the appearance of the facility.

IYC Warrenville has a lot of wood construction and fairly large windows in some of the living units. But the actual cells or rooms on some units are in poor repair. The plywood shelving and

cabinets are in places damaged or simply broken, scratched and nicked. The furniture includes hard plastic tables and chairs in a variety of colors. Much of it is scratched and in poor repair. The plumbing in some of the units is well below par. Facility staff is aware of these deficiencies and are trying to correct them; they do not view the wood materials as a hazard to security but they do want to improve them.

Sleeping rooms for girls in confinement are particularly bare, being shorn of regular bed sheets because of their potential in aid of suicide attempts and also having fewer if any book shelves or shelves for personal belongings. Some girls in the Victory cottage may experience these same conditions if they have recently articulated suicide thoughts.

4. Meals and food service

Girls at IYC Warrenville eat with their living units in a single dining room in the main building. Food served was average, not remarkable either way, but complained of by both girls and staff.

Girls are allowed to be quite sociable at meals. Visitors had a sense that meal time was successfully used as a social event for girls. Staff reported their dissatisfaction with the menus, which they claimed are the same as for adult inmates and not tailored to young women, some of whom are pregnant. Staff suggested a nutritional review of the menu because it appears high on carbohydrates and it is thought that girls gain weight particularly in winter months when recreation is limited.

Girls work in the kitchen and those we spoke with seemed to appreciate the work, although not with the enthusiasm that we found in some other Youth Centers. Here as at most Youth Centers, kitchen jobs are not teaching experiences. Girls do not seem to participate in meal planning and this seems a possible missed opportunity.

*One **performance measure** would be to undertake the suggested nutritional review at IYC Warrenville, and perhaps department wide.*

*Another **performance measure** would be to consider and possibly institute a vocational program and/or nutritional education program in concert with the work program in the dining hall to transform a work assignment into a vocational and training program.*

5. Increasing and maintaining landscaping efforts and the development of recreational fields.

IYC Warrenville sits on previously-farmed land that is flat and empty. There is more than enough room on which to plant beds of flowers, larger stock or even a Christmas tree farm, or vegetable gardens. In fact in past years the Youth Center did grow vegetables and contributed produce to local outlets.¹ The exterior of the facility would be vastly improved by flower beds,

¹ See, John Howard Association of Illinois report on visit to IYC Warrenville for 2001, page 2.

trees and other plantings. IYC Warrenville could be considered for a horticultural program with a secondary goal of replanting the grounds within and without the security perimeter.

Performance measures include: *replanting the grounds and property for aesthetic reasons; consideration given to establishment of a horticultural program for vocational training as well as to provide planting materials.*

B. Youth at Facility; Classification

1. Can the facility document the demographic profile and delinquency history of youth at the facility, and is documentation consistent with that provided by other Youth Centers?

Documentation of the demographics and histories of the girls at IYC Warrenville improved from 2006 to 2007, but even in 2006 the Department was charting the intake demographics of girls admitted to the Department.² Between visits, the Department assigned responsibility for classification to one employee, Janice Shallcross, who works at the Departments' headquarters in St. Charles. In essence, the Department pulled the classification and assignment function out of the Illinois Department of Corrections office in Springfield. As a result, Ms. Shallcross has all background and historical information of each of the girls in the Illinois Department of Juvenile Justice and, therefore, the girls at IYC Warrenville.

This performance measure will be satisfied by the Department and for each facility as it continues to record, analyze and track the demographics of youth as they are admitted to the Department. Based on the data it is now recording the Department should be able to report on and analyze racial and ethnic composition of admitted youth and other critical data.

2. Criteria, and consistency of use thereof, by which the suitability of the programs for girls at IYC Warrenville is determined.

With only two Youth Centers for girls in the state, and with the second of those focused on girls with drug treatment needs, the choice of Youth Center is far less complicated for girls than for boys. Essentially, girls accused of violent crimes, pregnant girls, and girls with moderate or higher mental health needs often requiring medication and therapy are assigned to Warrenville. Girls from the southern part of the state with substance abuse histories are assigned to Pere Marquette.

Within Warrenville, assignment to active programs is based on the assessment of the girl and available space in the program. At the time of our visit in May 2007, the drug treatment program operated by the Wells Center had a 30 bed capacity and a waiting list. Because the program has a minimum six month length of stay, time spent on the waiting list could significantly add to time an individual girl is required to remain with the Department.

² In the first five months of 2006, with a total of 92 admissions: 6 or 7% admitted girls were pregnant, one third had histories of domestic violence, sexual abuse and suicide attempts, two thirds or more had histories of drug and alcohol use, nearly half had previous psychiatric hospitalizations, 20% had either a mother (3%) or a father (17%) incarcerated, and just under one fourth were identified as having gang involvement or associations. Of this same group, 47 or 51% were African-American, 34 or 37% were white, and 11 or 12% were Hispanic. The Department is recording the type of admission, relationship to DCFS, age, county, and additional information for girls.

The mental health unit, located in the Victory Cottage, has a 10 bed capacity but fairly high turnover, with 55 girls finishing the program in the year prior to our May 2007 visit. There was a waiting list at the time of this visit but the expected wait time was two-three weeks.

The F.O.C.U.S. program (Female Offenders & Children Uniting Safely) is designed to assist girls who are pregnant or already have children. The program provides education on prenatal health, effective parenting, adolescent development, and birth control. The program encourages mother-child visitation in a special area on the unit and provides significant support to the girls to foster personal self-sufficiency and empowerment.

The practice at IYC Warrenville is not to assign girls under age 17 with girls 17 and older, which while reasonable, places some additional constraints on housing assignments.

The profile of girls at Warrenville suggests their involvement in criminal activity is wide-ranging, with commitments on a relatively small number of drug charges, domestic violence cases, batteries aggravated because they were committed against a school staff person, police officer or a correctional employee, theft, vehicle theft, burglary and property offenses, and a sprinkling of sexual offenses, robbery and murder or attempt murder charges. In short girls have a variety of criminal behavior and histories that are perhaps less relevant than the psychiatric, substance abuse, and histories of physical abuse that predominate.

As will be noted, there is a paucity of programs at Warrenville compared to the variety of problems with which girls sent to the Department must contend. The Department has moved counselors to each of the living units, and much of the support, observation, counseling and day-to-day intervention required by girls with the profile of mental health, substance abuse, and other problems is provided through these counselors.

We did not have information to evaluate the consistency by which criteria for assignment to programs at Warrenville are applied, but it seems fair to suggest that the three major programs are probably appropriate for a large number of girls who end up at Warrenville.

*Satisfaction of this **Performance measure** requires an evaluation of the needs of girls as represented by the histories and demographic profiles of girls committed to the Department and definition of the types or programs which would meet the needs of those girls better than would programs located in their communities.*

*Further satisfaction of this **performance measure** would require a redefinition of assignment criteria to new as well as existing programs and, possibly, to newly defined and differently-spaced living assignments.*

3. Monitoring classification and assignment of youth by race and ethnicity.

The Department and IYC Warrenville are now collecting ample data with which to monitor classification and assignment of girls by race and ethnicity. With only two Youth Centers for girls, monitoring race and ethnicity of girls assigned to programs is probably more likely to reveal any important disparity or unevenness in assignment or classification than in simply monitoring the choice of Youth Center. Moreover, given that there only three principal

programs at IYC Warrenville, one for mental health and the other for substance abuse, and that the number of girls who appear appropriate for each type of program outweighs the number of spots, it seems unlikely that an analysis of classification and assignment would indicate unexplained racial or ethnic disparities. Rather, the more relevant evaluation might focus on documenting the kinds of programs and services needed by the girls who are committed to the Department with an eye toward expanding or specializing existing services as well as gaining information on programs or services which might be more effectively provided in the community or outside a secure facility.

C. Behavior Management and Discipline

1. Modifying behavior management and institutionalizing balanced and restorative justice

During our 2006 visit, we encountered an application of balanced and restorative justice principles in discipline. Counselors and the psychologists in the Victory Cottage had developed a therapeutic approach to behavioral outbursts, refusals to follow orders such as to leave rooms (or cells), and other misbehavior including minor fighting. Girls in these situations were immediately counseled in the living area, calmed down, and their behavior discussed or responded to by counselors or the psychologist. Discipline might be an apology, acknowledgement of harm to another girl or staff person, or a “quiet time” or loss of a small privilege. The counselor and mental health staff told us that at first the security staff had resisted this approach, but that over time most security staff came to agree to and employ a similar approach, so that writing “tickets” occurred very seldom after an outburst or misbehavior that once resulted in a girl being placed in confinement.

There was some sense that the approach adopted in the Victory Cottage was acceptable because, all staff recognize, the girls assigned there have some level of mental health problem.

But by the May 2007 visit, we heard that the therapeutic approach with restorative justice overtones that was initiated in the Victory Cottage was being practiced throughout much of the Youth Center. Certainly IYC Warrenville had reduced its use of confinement almost to the point of it being more of a “time out” than “segregation” for punishment. Girls at this Youth Facility are given two hours of recreation, and can have and read magazines, books and leave the cell from time to time. The average time in confinement is 1.5 days, there were no girls in confinement at the time of our May 2007 visit, and two weeks before our visit the Youth Center had gone eight days with no girls having been placed in confinement. There is a general acknowledgement among line security staff as well as supervisors that confinement is not used as much as in the past, that there is instead more interaction between girls and counseling staff when the girls are “having a bad moment,” and that the staff talks to girls instead of placing them, alone, in confinement. When a girl is placed in confinement, a counselor talks to her immediately. A girl who improves her behavior can be released early from confinement.

*A positive **performance measure** at IYC Warrenville will be further application of the therapeutic approach to disciplinary problems, well underway and implicitly applying restorative justice principles, coupled with the addition of positive rewards not currently available, as noted in the next section.*

*An additional **performance measure** at IYC Warrenville was suggested during our May 2006 visit: in appropriate instances work might be introduced as part of a girl's "paying back" for past injuries, in line with restorative justice principles. The **performance measure** would be satisfied by further consideration of this suggestion combined with the introduction of expanded work at IYC Warrenville.*

*For the Department, a **performance measure** will be satisfied when the disciplinary approach and behavior management techniques developed and applied at IYC Warrenville are described, introduced to other Youth Centers through informal and formal training, and accepted and adopted by all professionals including security staff.*

*The Department will of course further satisfy **performance measures** when it fully develops a program of discipline and behavior management based on restorative justice principles, an exercise for which outside trainers and consultants will be helpful. But without delay, it should take advantage of the fact that it has already developed an initial operative model with existing security, counselor, and mental health professionals.*

2. Increases in awards and recognition for good behavior.

The use of rewards and recognition of good behavior is built into the decorations, paintings, and displays of achievement that are fairly prominent at IYC Warrenville, and to some extent into the approach taken to behavior management and discipline at the Youth Facility. Teachers and the staff or volunteers we observed in the library and classrooms seem to bestow positive recognition freely.

*But **performance measures** for improvement in positive rewards should include activities that are missing from or in short supply at IYC Warrenville.*

The telephone policy is relatively restrictive, with girls at Level 1 (which is for best behavior) permitted one phone call a week, girls at Level 2 limited to two per month, and Level 3 limited to one per month. As noted elsewhere these calls must be collect with the exception of one 15 minute call at state expense per month. For girls, more and longer calls might be a strong positive incentive.

Recreation is limited by staff and the physical setting, as described below. With fewer limitations girls could be rewarded with increased, access to gym equipment, outdoor recreation, and, popular at other Departmental Youth Facilities, barbecues and cookouts which are currently held in the courtyard once each summer month.

3. Modifications to Warrenville's disciplinary system and policies to protect staff from violence or assaults by youth.

In May 2007, we did not hear concerns from staff or girls about threats of violence or assaults. We did hear of incidents involving girls who were acknowledged to have mental health problems, in which staff were injured or at some risk. There seems to have been an understanding that with girls in this category the risk is real but that it is being handled realistically. In short we did not hear complaints of threat of injury to staff.

*A **performance measure** at IYC Warrenville will be to continue to monitor and evaluate any indication of unwarranted levels of violence or injury to staff by girls and to consider and respond to any reasonable employee concerns in this area.*

4. Conditions on the Confinement Unit

There are eight beds in the confinement unit. The unit is bare and under equipped, sometimes a necessity when a girl with mental problems or who is violent is confined.

*A performance **measure** would include a review of the condition and color and light used in confinement cell by psychologists and the artist in residence, and consideration of increased time out of confinement cells above the current, somewhat relaxed, levels.*

5. Chemical and waist-belt restraints and shackles

At IYC Warrenville, chemical restraints (pepper spray) and body restraints are on hand for use.

At the time of the May 2007 visit, there had been no use of chemical restraints for more than one year.

Performance in this area will be measured by development of a reasoned, standards- and “best practices” driven policy and successful implementation of that policy.

6. Adoption and distribution of new policies for staff and youth.

Both in 2006 and 2007 IYC Warrenville had written policies in place for girls to read (which they were required to do in the days or weeks they will be awaiting assignment to a living unit.) We did not review these documents for content.

As at all other Youth Centers, performance in this area will be measured not only by preparation and publication of updated policies and manuals or instructions for youth, but by effective dissemination including appropriate language, and, if merited by numbers of non-English speaking youth, written materials in other languages.

As for other Youth Centers, at the time of our visits the Illinois Department of Juvenile Justice was revising policies on almost all topics. Performance in the area of revised staff policies will be measured by preparation, approval and effective distribution.

7. Policies to protect staff from violence or assaults by youth.

It was reported to us during our May 2007 visit that line staff at IYC Warrenville has undergone positive changes in attitudes toward juveniles as inmates. There has been some training which

has helped. But at the same time, there are exceptional stressors due to staff shortages³ and, coupled with the “old school mindset” which emphasizes punishment and punitive consequences for all misbehavior, at times there have been regular “battles” between program and security staff.

To our knowledge, no new written policies addressing staff safety have been issued by the Illinois Department of Juvenile Justice. But our perception is that the lack of new published policies is less a problem than the lack of a developed, Department-wide explanation, or even discussion, or the Department’s new mandates for decreased use of confinement combined with a thorough discussion and explanation of the rationale for the change, and of strategies and means of assuring, to the fullest extent possible, staff safety and the preservation of discipline. We propose that changing the way in which confinement and in which chemical and physical restraints are to be used is as much a function of training and education as it is of drafting and introducing revised policies. We also regard training and education as a two-way activity involving discussion, dialogue and consideration of differing view points.

*Performance in the area of developing policies to protect staff from violence or assaults is entwined with performance in training and education for staff at all levels . **Performance measures** will be satisfied by development and implantation of new policies and by formal and informal training and education designed to shift attitudes, increase staff understanding of new departmental goals, and provide answers to staff concerns about their own safety and the security of Youth Centers.*

D. Restorative Justice

*Even though elements of restorative justice are apparent in the approach which has been developed to behavior management and discipline at IYC Warrenville, there was no familiarity with the term “Restorative Justice” among staff except at the Superintendent and senior staff level. There has been very little movement to satisfy **performance measures** related to implementing restorative justice as a guiding principle at the Illinois Department of Juvenile Justice.*

But as noted in the John Howard Association of Illinois’ reports, aspects of restorative justice principles are practiced to some degree in several Youth Centers, albeit without having been consciously labeled or identified with “Restorative Justice.” IYC Warrenville is one of these Centers.

*At IYC Warrenville, the following **performance measures** will mark progress in institutionalizing restorative justice principles at the Illinois Department of Juvenile Justice:*

1. Establishment of a program complimentary to the approach now taken by counselors and some line staff to train staff and to design and incorporate a program to orient girls into a restorative justice approach to resolving disputes and correcting for past wrongs.

³ Security staff shortages were pronounced, as noted below in Table 1. With staff sometimes required to serve up to three mandated overtime periods per week, the fatigue was not complained of, but observable in the faces of officers manning security desks and checkpoints.

2. Review methods now in place to resolve disputes and impose sanctions on girls with Restorative Justice practitioners, giving consideration to adding “courts,” “circles” or “peer panels” and to otherwise incorporating restorative justice principles.
3. Continue to change formal disciplinary procedures and facility rules to provide for restorative justice-based responses to rule violations and disputes among girls.
4. Monitor and review incident reports with a restorative justice practitioner; consider restorative justice responses to typical incidents, confer and discuss with staff, and change policies to encourage those responses.
5. With restorative justice professionals, develop a program to encourage and facilitate interactions between girls and crime victims guided by restorative justice principles in cases where there is an identifiable victim and where interaction is likely to be constructive for the girl.

E. Community and Family Contact

Girls at IYC Warrenville were from numerous counties in the state, including many at some distance from the facility. Cook County, which compared to other Youth Centers is quite close by, was home to only about a quarter of the girls at this Youth Center when we visited in May 2007.

The Youth Center sends letters to parents, allows visits on weekends and counselors are available to see parents on weekdays and on weekends. Staff members feel that they make every effort to encourage visits by accommodating parents whenever possible.

The IYC Warrenville counselors try to involve parents in family therapy. In the year before our May 2006 visit, they estimated that perhaps three families came for therapy.

Phone calls, as noted, are limited to a maximum of one per week, collect, and at a minimum one per month, for fifteen minutes at state expense.

1. Steps to increase parent contact

A measure of performance would include a review of the form and nature of information sent parents to assure openness, cultural fit, and that communications are as effective as possible. Additionally, consideration could be given to identifying girls during classification and orientation for which family involvement, communications, or support might be most helpful to his success in the program. For these boys, special or targeted and continuing outreach to parents might have significant benefits.

A second measure of performance would include careful and creative consideration given to increasing effective communications with parents, guardians or responsible family members at the outset of the program as an important part of developing aftercare (see below).

2. Seek parent's ideas on increasing visiting

As of our visit in May 2007, the administration had not formally surveyed or inquired of parents about ways to increase their participation in their daughter's program.

3. Flexibility in admitting girl's family visitors

*This **performance measure** is being met. The administration does not impose strict hour requirements on visitors and seem to genuinely encourage parent involvement with their child.*

4. Increasing the availability of transportation for family visitors

*Travel to IYC Warrenville is convenient by car from Chicago, but while the location is fairly central to the northern portion of the state, it is not to the southern or far western portion of the state. A **performance measure** will be satisfied if the Illinois Department of Juvenile Justice and individual Youth Center administrations has taken steps to ease the cost and difficulty of transportation for family visitors to any Youth Center. Various options such as vouchers, information on transportation in brochure form or on the Department's web site, and special arrangements with public and private transportation services need be explored.*

5. Activities for girls and visitors.

As of May 2007, there are few activities for parents and family members and girls at Warrenville apart from time spent in the visiting area. Among activities that might be considered are: athletics and athletic competitions in which visitors participate or observe, classroom reviews of academics and academic performance in which parents share their daughter's achievements, and supervised trips away from the Youth Center to locations as close as the two parks which are a few miles distant.

Efforts to design and put in place joint activities for girls and visitors are an important measure of performance.

6. Surrogate or volunteer visiting program for girls who do not receive visits.

As of May 2007, there was no program involving 'surrogate' or volunteer visitors. Warrenville does have many individual and organizational volunteers from who 'surrogate' visitors might easily be recruited.

7. Increased telephone access to parents, family or guardians.

The telephone call limits at Warrenville, as at other Youth Centers, should be relaxed, and a greater portion of the cost of calls born by the Department. The value of positive family contact is ridiculously out of balance with the cost of competitive-rate, direct calls from a state facility. It is harder to image a more favorable cost-benefit ratio.

Both at IYC Warrenville and within the Department, one solid performance indicator would be a policy allowing more calls, made at lower cost, and integrated into reentry and aftercare strategies.

F. Education

1. Teaching and school staff

During our visit in 2006, the school was short by five teachers out of a compliment of 12; there was no principal. At the time of our May 2007 visit, the school had a principal but was short a physical education teacher, high school teachers, and three special needs teachers. Because of the shortage of teachers, girls were in school only half a day.

IYC Warrenville is located in an area where there are many teachers and other professionals but the pay scale works against the Department, as local teaching positions pay more than the state scale. While comparable pay may be a real problem, IYC Warrenville like other Youth Facilities is the victim of delays in posting and hiring which have plagued the Department since it was a division of the Illinois Department of Corrections.

The failure to provide adequate teaching staff is one of three major program elements that cripple the positive contributions which this Youth Center otherwise would be making to the girls who are within its care.⁴ Because IYC Warrenville lacks vocational programs and a physical education program or a recreational program run by Leisure Time Specialists, and because there are basically three programs operating within the Youth Center, girls not in school have unused and undirected time. They are vocal about the lack of activities. The saving grace are the counselors, of which all positions are filled, and who are now on the units with the girls, and while overburdened trying to make up in some ways for the lack of activities, provide attention, intervention and an adult presence that is necessary. Given that many girls have learning disabilities or are behind their optimal grade levels, and that the average length of stay is about seven months, or close to one academic year, failure to provide teaching and particularly special education to all girls for the full time they are at the Youth Center amounts to a terrible, dollar-wasting missed opportunity to improve their lives and prospects upon release, not to mention a violation of the spirit if not the letter of state law.

With a shortage of classes and subject courses, particularly special education, girls cannot be grouped into classes according to level or ability.

*It remains absolutely essential and a critical **performance measure** that the Illinois Department of Juvenile Justice fill all teaching positions. Each continuing month of teacher vacancies undercuts the Department's mission. The John Howard Association of Illinois is aware that the difficulties in hiring teachers have been the focus of Departmental efforts and of legislative concern and that much of the problem in hiring sufficient teachers lies outside the control of the Department. Other than to declare an obvious crisis, absent a state-level commitment to filling teacher positions there seems little that can be done short of litigation in the interest of affected girls.*

⁴ In addition to failure to provide education, the other missing elements are lack of vocational experience and training (see sec. G, below) and absence of an aftercare component reaching into the community to which girls return (See Sec. K, below).

2. Library and related educational facilities

The library at this Youth Center is open, well-supplied with paperback and hard back books, of a size similar to that which might be found in a regular, small middle school, well lit, organized and used. It is located in the main building and seems to be a communication center, with several doors and outside traffic passing through. Girls are present, reading and talking with library staff or teachers. (This may be a reflection of the lack of a full schedule of organized classes.) Girls seemed comfortable speaking to our visitors while we were in the library. They are encouraged to take paperback books to their rooms, and we observed that many do.

The library has been supported by an active volunteer program and our visitors understand that many books are donated from church and other community groups.

*A departmental **performance measure** would be to provide library facilities, resources and numbers of books in line with the level at which they are found at IYC Warrenville.*

G. Vocational, Social Skills Training and Group Programming

1. Job training and vocational programs

There are NO vocational programs at IYC Warrenville. This notwithstanding that the space and equipment are on hand for a working, teaching beauty parlor. Equipment was donated, the space is set aside in one of the trailer-styled portable buildings located on the compound and has been decorated by girls and the “artist in residence.” Currently it is used as a beauty shop by girls who cut each other’s hair and share skin care and other services. It would obviously be a popular program.

But not necessarily the most popular. Visitors informally polled a classroom of girls who identified “vocational programs” as one of their important needs about preferences. The lead contender was for auto repair classes and the choice was roundly supported during a short discussion. Other areas in which vocational training might be welcome and fairly easily provided include computer work, office management, and financial and banking skills, but the list is limited only by imagination and some priority-setting process.

A substantial number of girls at IYC Warrenville have learning disabilities or have consistently underperformed in school. Many will be leaving after their 18th birthday and will no longer be required to attend school. Others are obtaining their GED while in the Youth Center. It is hard to overstate the importance of providing job skills and training that is relevant to gaining meaningful employment leading to economic self-sufficiency, independent living, and healthy self-esteem which will allow the girls to remain free of exploiting relationships.

*IYC Warrenville will satisfy an important **performance measure** when it has in place at least one, and preferably a choice of, vocational programs designed to equip girls for living-wage jobs.*

2. Job Placement Programs

There are no job placement services, links or programs at IYC Warrenville. The staff views this as a shortcoming. There are however various aftercare related services, described in Section K, below.

*A **performance measure** will be satisfied if there is job counseling and placement services linked to vocational training, educational programming, and aftercare.*

3. Other group programming including anger management, parenting, literacy and violence interruption programs

Particularly in the Victory Cottage, visitors had a sense that counselors and staff mental health professionals were helping girls address a range of issues including anger management. The Wells Program focuses on substance abuse and dependency, but there appears to be an overlap into life skills and other broader areas. In a sense, girls at IYC Warrenville are living in a fairly structured therapeutic community and receive active counseling and interventions at moments of stress. The Youth Center has moved further in this direction with increased participation by security staff, reliance on other measures than punishment and confinement to encourage behavior modification, and with creative influences from the library staff, the artist in residence and management.

But the fact remains there are shortages in teaching staff and in medical and mental health service staff, and a lack of other programs. Pregnant girls are given medical and nutritional advice, but the extent of parenting skills taught is limited, particularly because babies have been removed from their mothers a short time after birth. The counselor staff, Wells Center staff and to some degree even the security staff do a credible job of compensating for programs and services, but they cannot be expected to substitute for professional staff and dedicated programs.

*A **performance measure** to be satisfied is, first, an evaluation of service and program needs, of the staffing needed to provide them, and second, implementation of those services and program needs that are needed.*

4. Community Work Projects and other activities outside the security perimeter

Currently IYC Warrenville does not permit girls to leave the Youth Center for community work projects. In past years it had done so and the leadership at the Youth Center would consider projects and trips outside the facility were there sufficient staff on hand to do so.

There are many resources, recreational areas, cultural opportunities and feasible community service sites close by, starting with two parks located east and west of the Youth Center, and extending into Chicago.

*A **performance measure** would be satisfied if IYC Warrenville considered and then implemented some reasonable combination of Community Work Projects and trips for recreational or educational purposes.*

H. Health Services

1. **Performance measures** are met when there has been a review of medical needs, vacant positions are filled including a nursing vacancy which has resulted in less than full time nursing coverage, and a physician experienced in gynecological medicine and obstetrics, and a psychiatrist and mental health supervisors are on the grounds for a sufficient time to meet all reasonable needs for mental health treatment or services for youth at this Center.

As for other Youth Centers, it appears that there have been no professional health services staffing review for IYC Warrenville. Medical services have been fairly consistently understaffed at Warrenville for years. There is no OB/GYN with admitting privileges at a local hospital on staff or provided by the medical contractor, a glaring deficiency in a facility of girls, several of whom are pregnant. Girls who do reach term are taken to a local hospital and admitted through the emergency room.

The Youth Center has had a health care administrator since 2006 who has adult, not adolescent, medical background.

The Youth Center is short one nurse. In consequence, it has 24 hour a day medical care on location only three days a week. At the time of our visit in 2007, there was at least one girl who was diagnosed as a schizophrenic, being seen three times a day, in daily therapy, and not judged to be oriented much of the time. Another girl had become suicidal after entering with no apparent mental health disorder. The staff's goal for her was simple: to keep her safe and secure, and to get her into hospital care. The Warrenville population is not one that is wisely left without full time 24 hour/day medical staff.

A psychiatrist who is shared with IYC St. Charles is available 17 hours a week. One of two staff psychologists has been on a leave of absence for ten months, there is no treatment unit supervisor, and there is one vacant social worker position.

*A reasonable and urgent **performance measure** will be full time 24 hour/day medical staffing at the Youth Center, assurance that there is ready access to an OB/Gyn at all times, and sufficient mental health staff to provide the interviewing, assessment, treatment and therapy that a troubled population of adolescent girls may be expected to need. **Performance measures** are, first, filling vacant positions and second, an assessment of medical and mental health staffing needs at this Youth Center.*

2. Number of hours a dentist and dental technician are on the grounds and the applied policy for prophylactic cleaning and dental care for youth at this Center.

Girls are sent to IYC St. Charles to see the dentist at that Youth Center. Usually about 6-8 girls are transported on Monday each week for cleaning and exams. We had no indication of any shortcomings in this arrangement.

***Performance measures** will be met when there has been a review of medical services which should include a review of the adequacy of current arrangements for dental care.*

3. Family participation in mental health, counseling or treatment sessions with girls.

Staff at IYC Warrenville make an effort to contact and stay in touch with parents, making contact at least once a month. Mental health staff has offered family therapy to girls' parents and relatives, but as noted above, only three families took advantage of this offer in the previous year.

Staff reasonably cautions that communications between girls and men or boys outside their families, and with some family members, may need to be prescribed due to the abusive or manipulative nature of the some relationships in which they are involved.. It further needs be recognized that for some girls, families or at least responsible adults are simply not available.

*Not ignoring previous efforts to involve families in the effort to assist girls, a **performance measure** would be satisfied if there were a plan to systematically engage families in therapy, counseling or the youth's drug treatment.*

4. Continuation of counseling and treatment for youth once they have left the Youth Center.

Counselors at IYC Warrenville generally set up treatment and support services for girls in their communities to help in their transition back after release. Those girls who are in the Wells Center drug treatment program have follow-up services arranged for them by TASC before they are released to go home. And, girls receiving mental health treatment are also referred to a community agency that is deemed appropriate in their home community.

Although counselors strive to set up services for girls upon their release, there is no reporting back or monitoring and report function that advises them whether or not a girl is following through, actually seeing a psychiatrist or other professional or is attending substance abuse counseling or meetings. Counselors assume that parole agents are in a position to report on the number of girls who are succeeding in their work or who are continuing with treatment.

*A **performance measure** will be satisfied when the mechanisms and processes for arranging placements for girls leaving IYC Warrenville is reviewed, fully implemented, and results in a referral from which there will be reporting back and possible on-going consultation on behalf of the girl.*

***Performance measures** will be satisfied when counseling and treatment, if appropriate, are built into an aftercare plan that is prepared for each youth, and then when that plan is monitored and the youth's success or failure on that plan is reported back to the Youth Facility that recommended it.*

I. **Recreation**

1. Leisure Time Activity Specialists

There is one Leisure Time Activity Specialist on staff. His role has been to supervise volunteers who oversee some recreational activities. Missing are the organization of team and individual sports and activities, "coaching" or assistance in learning athletic games or skills, cookouts or

barbecues more than once each summer month, and trips or activities outside the security perimeter.

*A **performance measure** at IYC Warrenville would be satisfied by hiring one additional Leisure Time Activity Specialists and implementing organized athletic activities including use of the Wellness Center equipment, the outdoor track, gym facilities and various activities such as foosball and board games which are available to girls.*

2. Competitive athletics and activities

As noted, there are not enough organized teams or individual athletic activities for girls, to the point that it is believed to affect their health. Staffing shortages are the key impediment to a more adequate program of athletics and exercise.

*A **performance measure** would be satisfied if the Youth Center assessed recreational needs and then met those needs with sufficient supervised activities and athletic and other programs.*

3. Outdoor and indoor recreational areas

Although IYC Warrenville has an outdoor running track, softball field, sand volleyball court and basketball court, visitors have rarely seen girls playing in these areas and have not heard that there is an active program of outdoor sports for the girls.

*A **performance measure** would be satisfied if girls began to participate in a variety of outdoor sports on a regular basis.*

J. Substance Abuse Treatment

1. Number of youth in need of treatment

Girls in the Wells Center program receive a fairly intense, four step, six-twelve month program directed at interrupting substance abuse. The program is built around a kind of 12 step process with intervention, therapy and counseling on a continuous basis.

Thirty girls may be in the program at one time, and there is a waiting list.

*A **performance measure** will be satisfied if there is a review or evaluation of the longstanding and seemingly well directed Wells Center program at IYC Warrenville.*

2. Continuation of drug counseling for youth once they have left the Youth Center.

As at other Youth Centers, there has been no formal effort to consistently follow through with the drug counseling that is provided girls at Warrenville, except that girls who graduate from the Wells Center program are counseled and advised by TASC staff once they are released to the community. There seems to be no reporting back to the Youth Center, so there is little sense of whether or not one program is actually providing decent services to youth.

*A **performance measure** will be satisfied if there is a seamless transition from drug treatment or mental health services of any kind provided within IYC Warrenville and the TASC or other services provided once a child is released.*

K. Reentry and Aftercare

Counselors work to prepare girls for parole. They advise girls on pre-parole planning in scheduled sessions and informally. Girls meet with a parole Field Services Representative to learn the rules with which they will have to comply and expectations upon release. Combined with the level of counseling and therapeutic treatment provided girls at Warrenville, the support services and arrangements that are made for girls as they leave Warrenville, particularly when carried forward in the community with services provided by TASC, make up the most systematic approach to reentry and aftercare within the Department save perhaps for the Parole Revocation Program at Joliet.

But it remains that for most girls there is no assurance of follow-through and no reporting back. Once a girl is back in the community and family structure from which she likely came, and which failed to keep her out of trouble, she is, more or less, on her own under the supervision of a parole agent who, likely, has more than a hundred adults on his or her case load. Staff members at IYC Warrenville are themselves dissatisfied with the loss of connections and relationships which they have, many times, worked very hard to develop.

*A **performance measure** will be satisfied when the initial and strong steps taken to prepare girls at IYC Warrenville for life in the community is developed into an integrated approach to planning for “reentry” in drug treatment, education, mental health services and other key areas of service which are to be provided in the girl’s home community, and a system for reporting back progress or failure to staff at the new Illinois Department of Juvenile Justice.*

Table 1: Staffing Levels IYC Warrenville

	2007	2008
Superintendents	1	1
Assistant Superintendents	1	1
Security Staff	43	36
Security Staff Supervisors	4	3
Educators	4	8
Leisure Time Activity Specialists	1	1
Counselors	6	6
Case Work Supervisors	0	0
Psychologists	1	0
Social Workers	1	1
Medical	1	1
Chaplain	0	0
Other Administrative*	17	23
Total	**	**

*This category includes maintenance, secretarial, business management, and food service.

**The total number of staff at IYC Warrenville cannot be accurately calculated from these figures because the facility has medical, mental health, and substance abuse treatment staff who are employed contractually and are not included in these figures.

Low staffing levels at IYC Warrenville are a tragedy. They cripple what has the potential of being an exemplary program. The lack of security staff renders some desired activities impossible. The lack of teachers cripples the school so that girls can attend only half the day. The lack of a Leisure Time Specialists leaves the girls with little organized activity to fill the time left unused because the school is closed part of the day. All that is needed to put in place a vocational beauty and health program is more teaching staff. An incomplete compliment of mental health staff limits the great work the existing staff is doing. The lack of a full time on-sight nurse or medical person is a risk to girls who are pregnant or mentally unstable. Counselors have gone a long way to make things work, and security staff have pitched in beyond the limits required by their contract. But the point is, with so much in place that could work well for girls at Warrenville, not having adequate staffing to “bring it home” leaves the Youth Center falling far short of its potential and the Department’s mission.

A **performance measure** will be satisfied only when there is a complete compliment of professional staff at all levels, including school and vocational teachers, mental health professionals, a night nurse, and security staff.