



Oregon

Kate Brown, Governor

Department of Human Services

Office of Child Welfare Programs

500 Summer St. NE, E-

Salem, OR 97301

Voice: 503-945-5600

Fax: 503-581-6198

TTY: 503-945-5896

DATE: May 10, 2019

TO: Senate Committee on Human Services

FROM: Child Welfare, Department of Human Services

SUBJECT: Red Rock Canyon School Response



Child Welfare's vision is for every child and family to have a safe and positive environment in which to live and thrive. We want to serve all youth involved with Child Welfare within the state of Oregon. When this is not possible, we look to out-of-state programs who have the ability to help children who face multiple challenges and require specialized care.

A coordinated on-site response to all treatment programs outside Oregon has been underway since April 14, 2019 to verify youth safety and program standards are met. Teams have visited these programs to verify the safety of our youth, confirm safe physical program environments, review policy, practice, clinical approach and procedure through interviews with youth, administration, case managers as well as conduct contract and licensing reviews.

On April 30-May 3, 2019 a coordinated team response occurred for the Centers for the Adolescent Recovery and Education or CARE programs who operate under Sequel Youth and Family Services throughout Utah. The team consisted of nine representatives from the Oregon Health Authority, DHS Children's Licensing Program, Child Welfare Treatment Services Program, key Child Welfare employees as well as one Registered Nurse.

On the evening of April 28, 2019, a significant incident occurred at Red Rock Canyon School, one of the four programs the response team was scheduled to visit. The program reported the following:

"A physical altercation between two students occurred which resulted in approximately 10 other students becoming involved. In an attempt to ensure the safety and security of our students and staff, local authorities were contacted. Our local police department responded to assist in addressing the situation and we are fully cooperating with their investigation. No students required hospital stays as a result of their injuries. All students were seen by emergency medical services the night of the incident."

Oregon youth were not detained for participation in the riot. However, when law enforcement intervened an Oregon youth sustained a minor injury and was treated. Additionally, two incidents involving improper use of restraint occurred with two separate staff related to one Oregon youth. These incidents were reported to the Oregon and Utah child abuse hotlines just after notification

"Assisting People to Become Independent, Healthy and Safe"

was received and there are ongoing investigations related to both. No injury was reported related to the first incident; there was a red mark and small bruise on the chin reported related to the second incident. He was seen by a nurse. The response team confirmed both staff were immediately terminated from the program.

Due to these concerns, key team members provided additional on-site response at the Red Rock program. Oregon personnel participated in three visits on April 30th, May 1st and May 3rd, 2019. The program implemented the following self-initiated an action plan, which was shared with Oregon licensing on-site on 5/3/19, in response to these concerns:

- Reduce census to 77 from 97 (population on Sunday 04/28/19) by end of May 2019. Addresses the concern of too many youth in the facility with such high needs and the ability to staff adequately.
- Not currently admitting any youth to the program.
- Increased overtime pay to two times the regular wage from time and a half.
- Salaried staff working additional shifts will receive an additional rate of \$200.00, an increase from \$150.00
- Staff members are paid \$50 to sleep on campus overnight. If there is a need, staff on duty can wake up these staff members for additional help, if needed. This will continue through the end of May 2019.
- There is a specific HR individual assigned by Sequel to work exclusively on recruiting new staff for the next 30-45 days.
- Friday May 3 and Monday May 6, 2019 there is an EAP therapist on site to speak with staff, also staff have been given information again on how to access an EAP therapist on their own.
- Sequel brought in veteran staff to support and work with new staff at Red Rock. This will continue through the end of May 2019
- A schedule has been developed so a supervisor will be working in the evenings and weekends to mentor and coach staff
- There is a lack of structured time in the evening and the program is working to develop more structured activities for the kids.

The following update was received from Red Rock Canyon School on 5/8/19:

- Staff and clients time is very structured. When a staff arrives for their shift, the staff is to report directly to the supervisor and the supervisor will assign staff where they are needed. Red Rock is addressing the schedule shift by shift to ensure they match the right staff working with the right youth and unit. At the end of their shift, staff are reporting directly to the supervisor before they leave campus.
- Red Rock is implementing a student leadership program. One youth from each unit was identified and asked what they need. The youth reported they wanted to be held accountable and want to feel safe. These youth have now developed a creed to live by while at Red Rock.
- There continue to be staff from other Sequel programs on campus as support. There is currently a group living director from another Sequel program on site. 2 staff from Michigan arrived 5/8/19 and 2 more from Michigan are arriving 5/10/19. On 5/11/19, a supervisor from Falcon Ridge will be on campus supporting staff and kids through the weekend.
- Red Rock had an all staff meeting this week and staff had the opportunity to ask questions and address rumors.
- The census at Red Rock as of 5/8/19 is 86. A couple of kids are graduating next week. They are working to get the census down to 75 by the end of May.

Additionally, Oregon Children's Care Licensing Program staff have scheduled a weekly check-in with Red Rock Canyon School to stay in communication regarding the implementation of the action plan. This staff will also continue to work with Utah Licensing as needed. At this time there has been no licensing action taken by the state of Utah. Also, Child Welfare has coordinated on-site visitation and youth visits each week for the next three weeks. High frequency, in-person visitation will continue for the time being.

The following informational overview was reported by the Oregon team in response to the program review:

Documentation and overall Nursing Perspective:

Programmatic documentation was reviewed by OHA, Child Welfare, Licensing as well as the RN and the entire team agreed that the documentation looked very good. From a nursing perspective, medical care is well documented, and the youth receive their physical, dental and vision appointment in a timely manner. Any medical needs were taken care of quickly and well documented.

Facility Review:

In addition to interviewing children and reviewing documentation, the team participated in a visual site review. This included observation of youth bedrooms, school setting, dining area, recreational area and facility grounds. Red Rock facility was previously a hotel. The bedrooms were observed to be clean and were set up with bunk beds with space by their beds for personalization. Some youth loved the food offered and others did not.

Recreation Options:

There is a recording studio on site and each youth has the opportunity to record music. They have yoga and meditation options. Sports teams including softball and basketball teams with youth and staff. They can engage in service projects for the community as well. There are opportunities to express themselves through art and art therapy; these pieces are displayed within the program.

Education:

Youth highlighted their positive experiences in school and how well they are progressing academically. The school setting includes a combination of classroom and online learning options that is tailored to the individual needs of each child.

Family Engagement

Several times a year the program, in communication with the caseworker, fly's parents down to visit and pays for hotel stays to allow families to visit for "parent weekend" which includes increased activities and family engagement.