



Wisconsin Department of Corrections

Governor Tony Evers | Secretary Jared Hoy

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Monitor finds atmosphere improved at LHS/CLS

Administrative confinement use down, staff and youth report improved mood

MADISON, Wis. – The 21st report from the federal court-appointed monitor for Lincoln Hills School/Copper Lake School (LHS/CLS) was filed Monday, noting an improvement in staff and youth attitudes, as well as fewer safety fears as the schools recover from the death of Youth Counselor Corey Proulx this summer.

The Wisconsin Department of Corrections (DOC) remained in compliance with all aspects of the consent decree and is in substantial compliance with 42 (or 84%) of the 50 provisions identified in the consent decree. Due to the temporary changes following the death of Youth Counselor Proulx, two provisions were reduced from “substantial compliance” to “partial compliance” from the previous reporting period. The reporting period covered July through September 2024.

“Immediately following the death of Youth Counselor Corey Proulx, DOC had to temporarily adjust staffing and programming to ensure the safety and security of both the staff and youth in the facility,” said Jared Hoy, DOC secretary. “It is important, however, to remember that the monitor noted improvements being made throughout the reporting period and that the uses of administrative confinement declined, and we look forward to returning to substantial compliance in those two provisions.”

The court-ordered consent decree was issued and agreed upon in response to a 2017 lawsuit over conditions at the facility under the previous administration.

The court-appointed monitor visited LHS/CLS on Oct. 7 and conducted 49 interviews with staff and youth.

“Youth and staff seemed calmer and more relaxed compared to the last site visit,” the monitor wrote in her report. “Youth were more talkative to the Monitoring team. The facility atmosphere was improved compared to the last visit.”



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The monitor's previous visit was less than two weeks after Proulx died from injuries sustained in an assault at Lincoln Hills School on June 24. A youth who was residing at the school at the time has been charged in Proulx's death.

“After the tragic loss of Corey Proulx, Defendants made changes to managing youths' behavior when they made threats of violence or were violent,” the monitor wrote. “Defendants need to continue to examine their use of all forms of confinement and review incidents to ensure that staff are not using any form of confinement as punitive confinement.”

Key findings from the report:

- Administrative confinement use was significantly lower. In September, there were six uses of administrative confinement at Copper Lake School and four at Lincoln Hills School. That compares to 61 uses at Copper Lake and 25 uses at Lincoln Hills in January.
- Staff seemed less exhausted, and staff did not verbally express a fear for their safety. When asked if staff had any concerns, they had shared no complaints with the monitoring team.
- The Treatment Team is heavily involved in the program, assisting the youth in identifying and addressing underlying motivations for anti-social or otherwise disruptive behavior, increasing insight and self-reflection, and learning/practicing skills to better respond to challenging emotions, experiences, and situations/environments.
- During the site visit, youth were engaged while in classrooms in the school. Youth were also playing basketball in the gym, reading in the library, and working on projects in wood shop.

A listing of all monitor reports can be found [here](#) on the department's website.