



# Wisconsin Department of Corrections

Governor Tony Evers | Secretary Kevin A. Carr

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

**October 27, 2020**

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## **7th Monitor Report Highlights Continued Compliance with Court Order**

*Monitor Notes DOC's Commitment to Implementing DBT Should be Commended*

**MADSION** – The court-appointed [Monitor's latest report](#) on conditions at Lincoln Hills School/Copper Lake School (LHS/CLS) finds the Wisconsin Department of Corrections (DOC) in partial or substantial compliance with every aspect of the consent decree stemming from a lawsuit over conditions at the schools.

The report, filed Tuesday, details the current focus at LHS/CLS on Dialectical Behavior Therapy (DBT), an evidenced-based treatment that promotes self-regulation and pro-social interpersonal skills as a way to help youth understand the cues that trigger their emotions. Planning for DBT implementation started in August in preparation for making it part of the standard behavioral motivation programming for all youth.

“DBT is the next step in our ongoing push to grow the level of engagement, and to reduce the amount of physical interventions and overall rates of incidents involving the youth in our care,” said DOC Division of Juvenile Corrections Administrator Ron Hermes.

The Monitor interviewed 59 youth and 34 staff members for this report, finding:

- Grounds and general areas of the facility are as clean as she has seen them
- Overall good attitude of youth
- Seven of 12 cottages remodeled with improved safety in mind (the rest scheduled for remodel)
- In general, no complaints from youth about confinement, restraints, being unfairly treated by staff or feeling unsafe

Contrary to the findings in the 59 youth interviews conducted by the Monitor, the report notes some youth complained to counsel (American Civil Liberties Union) about use of physical force and administrative confinement.

The Monitor also noted that a lack of programming and reliance on e-learning, due to restriction put in place during the COVID-19 pandemic, may have contributed to a more negative environment noted during this visit compared to the previous one.

The report mentions a number of youth and staff complaints about the current e-learning format, especially the lack of personal attention and real-time feedback from teachers, even though teachers check in frequently with staff and students.

Educational activities were moved from the school building to youth living units on March 24. The Monitor, in the report, “highly recommends” youth return to learning at the school as soon as reasonably possible, finding that regular environment changes throughout the day would help reduce mental fatigue and boredom among the youth.

“We’ve made the schools safe,” said DOC Secretary Kevin Carr, referencing improvements made at the schools the past two years. “Now the focus shifts to running a good treatment facility that improves chances for youth being successful when they return to their communities. Improving programming/activities is the next step and we are making no excuses, but instead moving forward to address these issues raised by the Monitor.”

To that end, the facility plans to implement a new youth schedule that focuses on reducing the amount of idle time. In addition, work is underway to enhance the behavioral motivation and incentive programs for youth.

“Our focus is to acknowledge and reinforce the positive things youth do on a daily basis,” said LHS/CLS Superintendent Klint Trevino.

Regular reports on Lincoln Hills School/Copper Lake School from the court-appointed monitor are connected to a 2017 lawsuit brought by the American Civil Liberties Union.