



WISCONSIN DEPARTMENT OF CORRECTIONS

Governor Tony Evers / Secretary Kevin A. Carr

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Monitor Report Identifies Continued Progress at Lincoln Hills/Copper Lake

Madison – The 18th report from the federal court-appointed monitor for Lincoln Hills School/Copper Lake School (LHS/CLS) was filed on Monday, noting continued improvements at the juvenile facility. The Wisconsin Department of Corrections is now in substantial compliance with 36 (or 72%) of the 50 provisions identified in the consent decree, four more than the previous reporting period.

The consent decree stems from a 2017 lawsuit over conditions at the facility under the previous administration. Under Gov. Tony Evers, the DOC has been in either partial or substantial compliance with all provisions of the consent decree. In the latest report, the department gained substantial compliance in provisions related to clinical observation, documentation and the department’s incident review process.

“The staff in the Division of Juvenile Corrections and at LHS/CLS continue to do an exceptional job improving operations and addressing all provisions of the consent decree,” said DOC Secretary Kevin Carr. “At the same time, we will not ignore the areas that still need attention, and we will continue to identify additional opportunities to build upon the progress being made at the facility.”

The court-appointed monitor visited LHS/CLS in October and conducted 48 interviews with staff and youth. They noted the cleanliness of the facility, fewer instances of administrative confinement, and the overall positive interactions between staff and youth. They also praised the DOC for creating a “homelike” environment and noted the following improvements:

- Replacement of dayroom televisions with larger models.
- Installation of televisions in the upper day classroom for staff to use with youth.
- Installation of 80-inch monitors in classrooms to assist with instruction.
- Completion of new living unit sidewalks and stairways.
- Expansion of video production studio space and capabilities for the Music and Arts Initiative.
- Requests to update dishwashers, sinks and living unit bathrooms.

“The [DOC] should be commended for their continuing commitment to improving the physical plant, which improves the daily lives of staff and youth,” the monitor wrote.

Staffing levels have improved since the last report, but the DOC continues to hold hiring events to address worker shortages. The monitor noted the vacancies, especially among education staff, but they applauded the DOC and its efforts to address the shortages.

“The [DOC is] working diligently to try to attract and retain staff for these critical roles and have truly created significant incentives for new and existing employees to help with attracting new talent and retaining current staff,” the monitor wrote.

The DOC continues to move forward on the development of a new Type 1 facility in Milwaukee County. On August 9, the Wisconsin State Building Commission approved funding for construction of the new facility, as well as funding for the planning and development of a second Type 1 facility in Dane County. The projects would allow youth to be closer to their families and community support systems. The Milwaukee County project is expected to be completed in 2026.

A listing of all monitor reports can be found on the [DOC website](#).