



OFFICE OF THE COUNTY EXECUTIVE
Milwaukee County
CHRIS ABELE • COUNTY EXECUTIVE

Date: February 2, 2016

To: Milwaukee County Board of Supervisors

From: County Executive Chris Abele

Subject: Milwaukee County Executive Chris Abele Calls on County Board to Create a Team to Monitor Youth at Lincoln Hills and Expand Local Alternatives to Incarceration

In the wake of troubling allegations of abuse at the Lincoln Hills and Copper Lake juvenile detention centers, and as part of an ongoing commitment to reform Milwaukee County's juvenile justice system, Milwaukee County Executive Chris Abele is today calling on the Milwaukee County Board of Supervisors to immediately create and fund a team of 12 staff who will expand the Milwaukee County Accountability Program (MCAP) within the Juvenile Detention Center and to monitor the Milwaukee County youth committed to the Department of Corrections/Division of Juvenile Corrections.

While the county executive has actively been engaged in conversations on juvenile justice reform with partners in the criminal justice community for years, the reports out of Lincoln Hills and Copper Lake --conditions described as "inhumane" by Chief Judge Maxine White -- brought about a heightened level of urgency. To begin addressing this as quickly and responsibly as practicable, the county executive convened a workgroup with key stakeholders, including the Chief Judge and Children's Court, District Attorney, Public Defender, Department of Health and Human Services and other key County departments to explore all possible options to protect these vulnerable children.

As a result of these meetings, the county executive is requesting that the County Board authorize the creation of, and allocate funding for, 12 new full-time positions within the Delinquency and Court Services Division (DCSD) to expand the Milwaukee County Accountability Program within the Juvenile Detention Center and to monitor the Milwaukee County youth committed to the Department of Corrections/ Division of Juvenile Corrections (DOC/DJC), including those placed at Lincoln Hills and Copper Lake.

Four of the new positions, including an aftercare manager and three human services workers, in addition to three existing human services worker positions included in the 2016 budget, will allow DCSD to expand oversight, advocacy, monitoring, and support of DOC/DJC-involved youth and will work to address ongoing concerns regarding the services, care, and educational programming of Milwaukee County youth. These staff will conduct a thorough review of every case to determine the appropriateness of individual programming and placement plans, so that children can be placed in community-based alternatives closer to home while balancing public safety.

These positions will supplement current efforts to provide aftercare services to Milwaukee County youth placed at Lincoln Hills/Copper Lake. Wraparound Milwaukee has started to review identified Milwaukee County youth currently at Lincoln Hills/Copper Lake schools to assess their mental health needs and where appropriate develop treatment plans. Further, through a contract with a community-based agency, 75 Milwaukee County youth are being reviewed to determine their aftercare community needs which may be accessed through the Milwaukee County DCSD programs.

In addition, the addition of eight juvenile correctional officers will allow the County to double the number of youths served under the MCAP program in the Juvenile Detention Center.

BACKGROUND ON MILWAUKEE COUNTY ACCOUNTABILITY PROGRAM:

The Milwaukee County Delinquency & Court Services Division (DCSD) continues to move forward with efforts to reduce recidivism in Milwaukee County and to offer viable substitutes to detaining youth.

In 2012 DCSD teamed up with the Annie E. Casey foundation to implement new juvenile justice system reforms and was one of only three sites in the state of Wisconsin chosen to participate in the foundation's Juvenile Detention Alternatives Initiative (JDAI). The program has successfully reduced the number of youth in confinement while maintaining or improving public safety in other states across the country. In addition, DCSD received a \$725,000 federal grant to develop and implement new tools that enable officials to make informed decisions about resources and services for youth.

One of the most significant reform efforts included the launch of the new Milwaukee County Accountability Program (MCAP) in 2012 by the county executive. MCAP is designed to allow qualified youth to stay close to home instead of being sent to a Juvenile Correction Institution four hours away from Milwaukee. Youth in the program are placed in the secure detention center for up to five months (180 days) and undergo a seven month period of aftercare in the community under juvenile supervision, with family engagement.

MCAP features several key services including:

- Education – Wauwatosa Public Schools provide classes in reading & English, math, social studies, science, physical education/health and art. Credits earned are transferable to the child's local school district.
- Juvenile Cognitive Intervention Programming – Running Rebels Community Organization runs daily groups to help youth change their thought process in order to make better choices.
- Family Counseling – All MCAP participants are expected to participate in weekly counseling sessions. These sessions include parents/guardians when possible.
- AODA Education & Counseling - Alcohol & drug abuse counseling is provided to help participants understand the effects of substance abuse.
- Restorative Justice – Groups will be provided to help youth build a sense of community within the program, examine their behavior and learn new skills.
- Targeted Monitoring – Participants will be assigned to a monitor from Running Rebels Community Organization.
- Electronic Monitoring – GPS monitoring will be required during home passes and upon initial release to the community.

- 72-Hour Hold – Youth on aftercare status will be subject to holds in secure detention for investigation of any alleged violations of the rules of their supervision.

Under the leadership of County Executive Abele, DHHS Director Hector Colon, and DCSD Division Administrator B. Thomas Wanta, Milwaukee County has made great strides toward increasing the effectiveness of service delivery in the juvenile justice system through the implementation of evidence-based practices, Client-centered services and data-driven decision-making. DCSD has introduced validated evidence-based assessment, intervention, treatment, and management practices that research has shown reduce the risk of re-offending, balancing public safety with improved outcomes for individuals and families.