



LIMITED-SCOPE PERFORMANCE AUDIT REPORT

Kansas Juvenile Correctional Complex: Surveying Staff on the Management Culture at the Facility

AUDIT ABSTRACT

The Kansas Juvenile Correctional Complex (KJCC), the state's only juvenile correctional facility, is located in Topeka and administered by the Kansas Department of Corrections. We surveyed current and former KJCC non-management staff to gather their opinions on the management culture at the facility. Of the 219 staff who received a survey, 48 responded (a 22% response rate). These respondents had mixed opinions about KJCC's management culture. For example, although only 6 respondents agreed that employee morale is high at KJCC, 27 agreed or strongly agreed that they hoped to be working at the facility in a year. Further, although 23 respondents agreed or strongly agreed that they felt safe working at KJCC, 7 respondents reported being attacked or assaulted by other KJCC staff during the past year.

**A Report to the Legislative Post Audit Committee
By the Legislative Division of Post Audit
State of Kansas
December 2018**

From the Legislative Post Auditor:

This limited-scope audit was authorized by the Legislative Post Audit Committee at its April 25, 2018 meeting. It addresses the following question: What do Kansas Juvenile Correctional Complex employees report regarding the management culture at the Kansas Juvenile Correctional Complex?

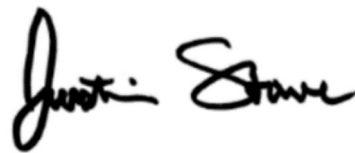
To answer this question, we worked with the Kansas Department of Corrections to compile the names, home addresses, and job titles of current and former Kansas Juvenile Correctional Complex (KJCC) staff. We then created and sent a survey asking KJCC non-management staff to report their opinions on the facility's management culture. Our survey included specific questions about management communication, employee evaluations, and workplace safety and security. Of the 229 surveys we sent out, 10 were deemed undeliverable and 48 were returned, for a response rate of about 22%. This response rate is insufficient for us to reliably conclude that the responses we received accurately represent the opinions of the entire population of current and former KJCC non-management staff. However, the responses do provide some insight into the culture at the facility.

We conducted this performance audit in accordance with generally accepted government auditing standards. Those standards require that we plan and perform the audit to obtain sufficient, appropriate evidence to provide a reasonable basis for our findings and conclusions based on our audit objectives. Overall, we believe the evidence obtained provides a reasonable basis for our findings and conclusions based on our audit objectives.

Audit standards require that we report on any work we did related to internal controls, but a review of internal controls was not part of the scope of the audit as approved by the Legislative Post Audit Committee.

This audit was requested by Senator Anthony Hensley and Representative John Alcalá and conducted by Andy Brienzo. Chris Clarke was the audit manager. If you need any additional information about the audit's findings, please contact Andy Brienzo at (785) 296-3792.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Justin Stowe". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Justin Stowe
Legislative Post Auditor

What do Kansas Juvenile Correctional Complex Employees Report Regarding the Management Culture at the Kansas Juvenile Correctional Complex?

Background Information

Kansas Juvenile Correctional Complex (KJCC), the state's only juvenile correctional facility, is located in Topeka and administered by the Kansas Department of Corrections (KDOC). Originally established as the State Reform School in 1879, KJCC is a 235-bed medium and maximum security facility. It houses male and female offenders who have generally been convicted of offenses that would be considered felonies if committed by adults. In July 2018, KJCC had a total population of 171. KDOC closed the 128-bed Larned Juvenile Correctional Facility in March 2017, leaving KJCC as Kansas' only juvenile correctional facility.

KJCC staff includes management, administrative staff, correctional officers, and various support staff. As of September 2018, KJCC had about 210 staff positions. That includes administrative staff in areas like finance and procurement and correctional officers charged with directly overseeing the juvenile offenders. It also includes numerous maintenance, custodial, laundry, counseling, chapel, and other support staff who help facilitate KJCC's operation. Finally, KJCC also contracts with outside entities to provide educational, dining, and health services to the facility's juvenile offenders.

Legislative Post Audit's 2012 audit of KJCC found pervasive problems with the management of the facility. That audit reported poor personnel management as well as an environment that did not ensure the safety and security of KJCC's juvenile offenders and staff. Problem areas included poor management, insufficient training for correctional officers, inconsistent and ineffective staff disciplinary practices, and inadequate or nonexistent safety-related policies and procedures. The audit also showed KJCC management did a poor job of addressing certain problems, including inadequate supervision of juvenile offenders, open or unlocked doors, and prohibited items being allowed in the facility.

A 2015 follow-up audit showed KJCC management had improved some of the shortcomings identified in 2012. However, the 2015 audit also found management had failed to adequately address some problems identified in the prior audit, including inadequate supervision of juvenile offenders as well as outdated and poorly communicated policies and procedures.

Current legislative concerns about KJCC's management culture were prompted by the assault of a staff member by the former superintendent in December 2017. According to media reports, the superintendent yelled at and grabbed another KJCC employee because she had not secured enough volunteers for KJCC's 2017 Christmas celebration for the facility's juvenile offenders. Although the superintendent was initially reassigned within KDOC, he resigned in July 2018 upon his conviction for misdemeanor battery. The former superintendent of Larned Juvenile Correctional Facility became superintendent of KJCC in September 2018.

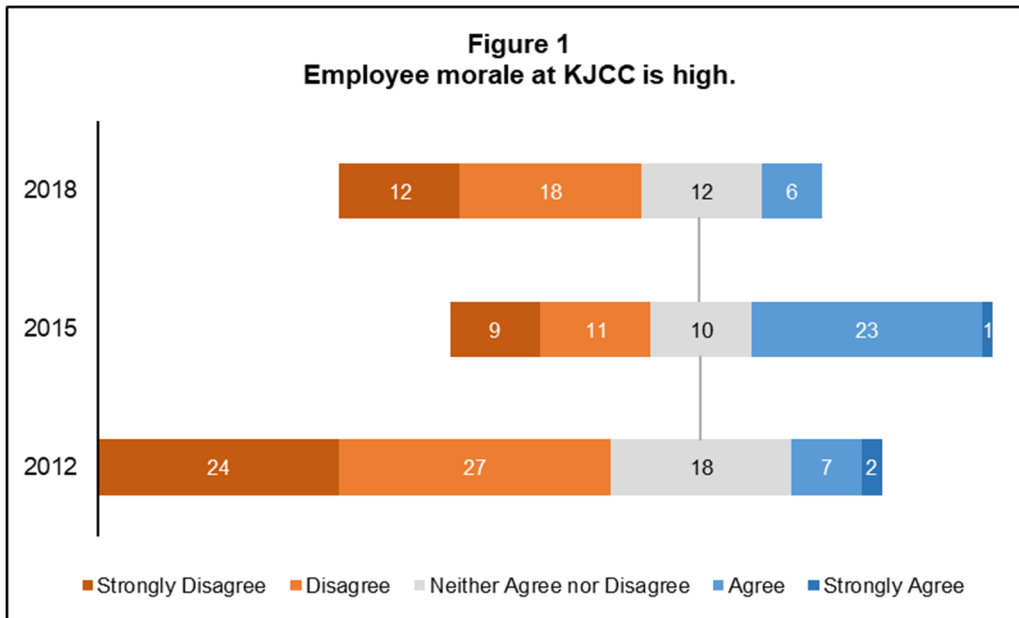
We sent a hard copy survey to 229 current and former KJCC non-management staff about the management culture of the facility and received 48 responses. To do so, we contacted KDOC and requested the names, home addresses, and job titles for all current KJCC employees as of September 2018. We also requested this information for anyone who had left KJCC employment during the previous six months (i.e., since March 2018) to ensure we incorporated the opinions of recently separated employees. To prevent the management staff who were the subject of the survey from receiving it, we asked KDOC to identify the KJCC staff they would consider to be “management.”

Using this information as well as KDOC position descriptions, organizational charts, and supervisory relationship information, we identified 229 non-management staff. Of the 229 surveys we mailed, 10 were returned as undeliverable. Of the 219 that were successfully delivered, we received 48 responses for an overall response rate of about 22%. However, the response rate for each question varied because respondents did not always answer every question. Finally, we reused some of the same survey questions we used in our 2012 and 2015 audits of KJCC. Where possible, we compared current respondents’ opinions to those we received during these prior audits.

Our survey results have some significant limitations. Most importantly, the responses we received cannot be projected to the entire population of current and former KJCC non-management staff. This is because of the low response rate and the possibility of response bias. The 48 responses we received may be biased because certain survey recipients may be more likely to respond than others (e.g., staff with strong opinions or those who have grievances against KJCC or KDOC management). However, only 6 respondents self-identified as separated KJCC employees. We checked whether the opinions of these 6 respondents materially affected the results of the survey and found they did not. As a result, we think the survey results are reliable for the purposes of our findings and conclusions, which are simply to report KJCC non-management staff opinions as they have been reported to us. Finally, we did not identify the reasons for, or attempt to validate, any of the opinions expressed by the survey respondents.

Finding #1: Survey Respondents Expressed Mixed Opinions on the Management Culture at KJCC

Although very few survey respondents agreed that employee morale at KJCC is high, most reported a desire to continue working at the facility. Most respondents expressed negative opinions regarding KJCC staff morale. We asked whether they agreed or disagreed with the statement that morale is high: 30 respondents disagreed or strongly disagreed and 6 agreed that employee morale is high, with no one strongly agreeing. **Figure 1** summarizes responses related to employee morale: negative responses are orange, neutral responses are gray, and positive responses are blue. As **Figure 1** shows, the 2018 results are more negative than those from 2015, when staff were more evenly split. In 2015, 24 staff agreed or strongly agreed that morale among KJCC staff was high and 20 disagreed or strongly disagreed.



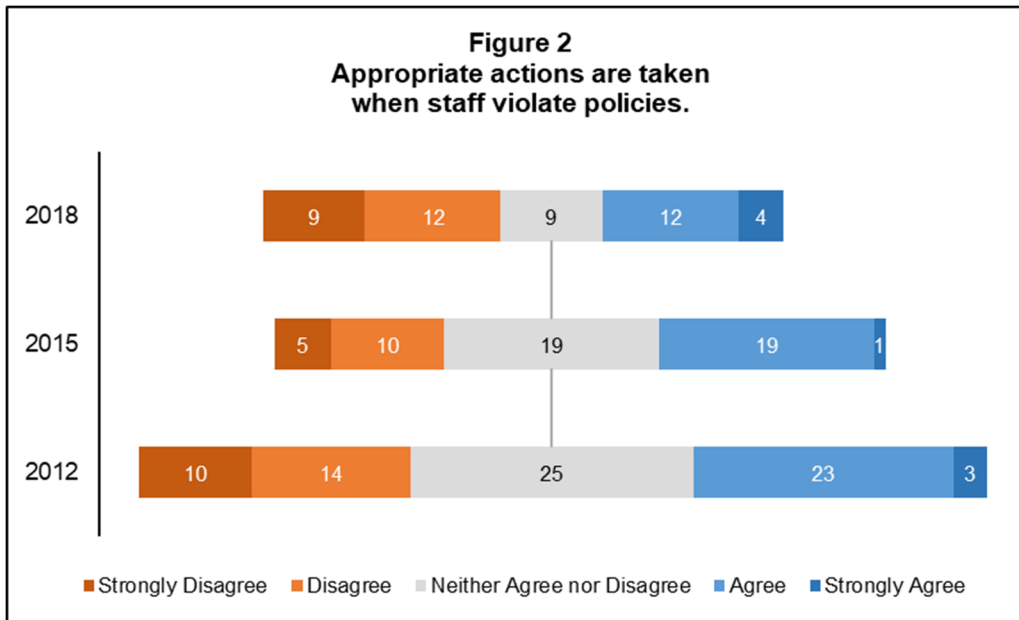
Despite these results, 25 respondents disagreed or strongly disagreed with the statement that they were seeking other employment. Further, 27 agreed or strongly agreed that they hoped to be working at KJCC one year from now. Some respondents used their responses to our open-ended question at the end of the survey to express opinions on these topics:

“I have seen people demoted for things that were not as severe as [the] punishment was. I have seen people get away with things that should never be allowed, yet they are still working in [the] same capacity with little to no severe punishment. That stuff kills morale.”

“I believe a great number of the [administrative] staff turn a blind eye to the policies and undermine the operation staff.”

“I’m very proud to be a part of KJCC!!”

Respondents expressed divided opinions on whether KJCC management takes appropriate action when staff violate policies or makes fair personnel decisions. As *Figure 2* shows, 21 respondents disagreed or strongly disagreed with the statement that appropriate actions are taken when staff violate policies, but 16 agreed or strongly agreed. *Figure 2* shows that these results are similar to previous surveys of KJCC staff in prior audits, although those surveys showed slightly more positive results.



Further, 22 respondents said they observed incidents or violations of policy within the last year that they did not think were handled appropriately.

Finally, opinions were mixed regarding personnel decisions. Of those who responded, 22 disagreed or strongly disagreed with the statement that KJCC management’s personnel decisions are fair, yet 15 agreed or strongly agreed. Again, some survey respondents provided opinions on these topics in their responses to our open-ended question:

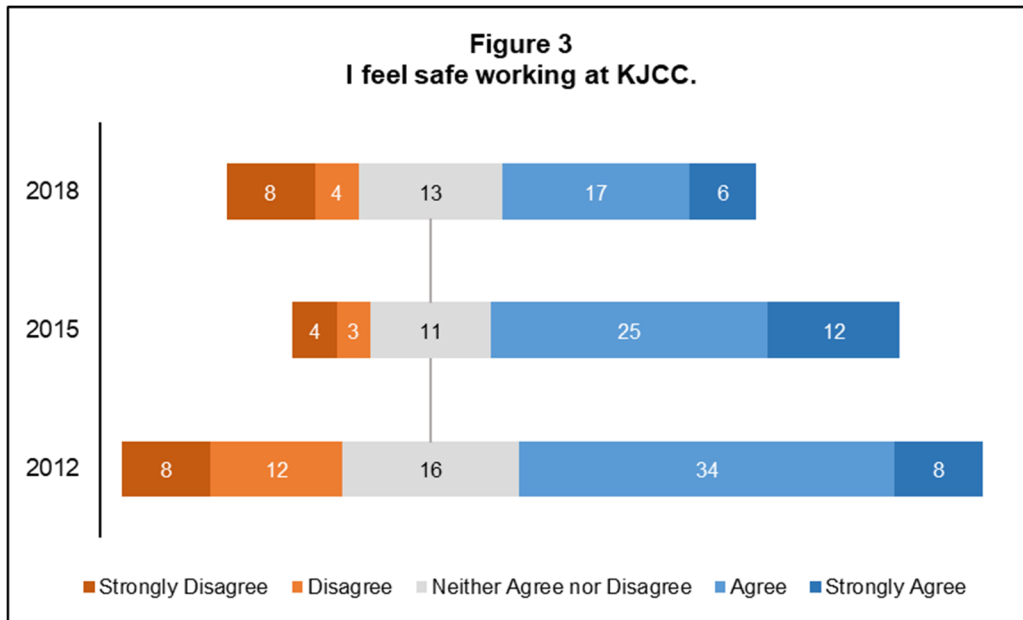
“Many staff have not had evaluations completed in years.”

“Progressive discipline for operation staff is not followed. Depending on who you are will dictate your discipline.”

“Inconsistent punishments based [on] if staff is liked or not.”

“I have seen supervisors especially [lieutenants] and captains at KJCC showing favoritism and not being professional.”

More respondents agreed with the statement that they feel safe working at KJCC than did not, but some reported feeling intimidated, threatened, or concerned about retaliation from either co-workers or management. In response to the statement about feeling safe at work, 23 respondents agreed or strongly agreed and 12 disagreed or strongly disagreed. As **Figure 3** shows, responses in this category have consistently been more positive than negative.



Regarding feeling intimidated or threatened by co-workers, 8 respondents agreed or strongly agreed. However, 15 agreed or strongly agreed that they are concerned about retaliation from their co-workers. We received slightly more negative responses regarding KJCC management. For questions regarding feeling intimidated or threatened by management, 14 respondents agreed or strongly agreed, and 18 agreed or strongly agreed with being concerned about retaliation from management. Some survey respondents provided open-ended question responses on these topics:

“Our HR department doesn’t know how to handle complaints against a manager. Our HR department gave the complaint to the manager the complaint was about. [The manager] then confronted and intimidated the employee who made the complaint.”

“Staff should never be in fear of termination on a daily basis and many are scared if they ‘screw up,’ they will be fired. Even for minor things.”

“Anyone that speaks out about staff safety or any issues is targeted until the staff can no longer take the abuse and quits.”

“I have had friends and family interested in a job at KJCC and I have told them of the unfair way employees are/were treated.”

It is important to note that 7 respondents reported being assaulted or attacked by KJCC staff in the last year. Because staff assault was a primary reason for this audit, we included a question on this issue in our survey. When asked whether they had been attacked or assaulted by KJCC staff within the past year, 7 respondents said they had. This is higher than in either 2015 or 2012. Only 3 respondents reported being attacked or assaulted on each of those surveys, even though we received more responses in those years. We did not attempt to investigate or substantiate any of these incidents.

Finally, survey respondents touched on several additional topics in their answers to the open-ended question at the end of our survey, including 3 allegations of sexual relationships between staff members and juvenile offenders. At the end of the survey, we gave staff an opportunity to provide additional comments. In all, 35 respondents provided written comments. Many of these comments addressed topics beyond the three primary management culture issues we asked about (i.e., management communication, employee evaluations, and workplace safety and security). Topics that came up more than once in these comments include:

- inappropriate romantic relationships between staff members or between staff and juvenile offenders, including 3 allegations of sexual relationships between staff members and juveniles.
- inaccurate reporting of the facility's performance against certain metrics, such as removing juvenile offenders from segregation while auditors are at the facility.
- a pervasive "boys' club" mentality that provides preferential treatment to favored staff and encourages others to quit if they are unhappy.
- excessive lenience toward juvenile offenders, which puts staff in danger.

Because this is a limited-scope audit, we did not attempt to substantiate any of the comments. The survey instrument we sent and the aggregated responses we received to each closed-ended question can be seen in *Appendix A*, along with comparisons to the results from the 2015 and 2012 audit surveys.

Recommendations

None

Agency Response

On November 2, 2018, we provided a copy of the draft audit report to the Kansas Department of Corrections (KDOC) for an official response. In its response, KDOC noted the statistical limitations of the survey results but nevertheless stated the survey results have value to the agency's continual efforts to improve the Kansas Juvenile Correctional Complex.

The full text of KDOC's response is on file and available from Legislative Post Audit.

APPENDIX A
Survey Instrument and Aggregated Responses

This appendix contains a copy of the survey we mailed to current and former KJCC non-management staff and the aggregated responses we received. It also contains aggregations of the responses we received in 2015 and 2012 for those questions that were similar across surveys.

Kansas law (K.S.A. 46-1129) makes all responses to our surveys confidential. As such, the individual responses we received are not included in this appendix and were not disclosed to Kansas Department of Corrections officials.

Survey of Kansas Juvenile Correctional Complex Non-Management Staff

The Legislative Division of Post Audit is the audit arm of the Kansas Legislature. Our office evaluates the performance of state agencies and programs, and we have been directed to evaluate the management culture at the Kansas Juvenile Correctional Complex (KJCC). As part of our work, we are asking that you take a few moments to complete the enclosed survey.

Under Kansas law (K.S.A. 46-1129), the responses to all surveys conducted by the Legislative Division of Post Audit are confidential. The information from the survey responses we receive will be summarized and reported in a non-identifiable manner. Neither KJCC officials, KDOC officials, legislators, nor members of the public will be able to see or have access to your survey responses. Your responses will only be seen by our audit staff, so please feel free to tell us anything you think would help us. The survey should take about 5-10 minutes to complete.

If you have any questions about the survey or would like to talk with an auditor, please call Andy Brienzo, Senior Auditor, at (785) 296-4593 or Chris Clarke, Deputy Post Auditor, at (785) 296-6502. You may also reach them via email at andy.brienzo@lpa.ks.gov or chris.clarke@lpa.ks.gov.

Thank you very much for your help. **We would appreciate if you mailed your completed survey back to us no later than Wednesday, October 10, 2018.** A postage-paid envelope has been enclosed for your convenience.

GENERAL INFORMATION

1. What is your current (or, if no longer employed at KJCC, most recent) position? (please mark one)

	Security	Administrative	Professional or Medical	Educational or Vocational	Support	Other
2018	24	7	6	0	8	3
2015	26	7	8	1	10	3
2012	36	5	15	13	5	4

2. How long have you worked (or, if no longer employed at KJCC, did you work) at the Kansas Juvenile Correctional Complex? (please mark one)

	Less than 6 months	6 months to less than 1 year	1 year to less than 5 years	5 years to less than 10 years	10+ years	No Response
2018	5	3	11	6	22	1
2015	3	2	17	8	25	0
2012	5	8	28	14	23	1

3. What shift do (or, if no longer employed at KJCC, did) you usually work? (please mark one)

	1 st shift	2 nd shift	3 rd shift	1 st and 3 rd Shift	Other	No Response
2018	25	12	3	1	5	2
2015	22	11	8	0	14	0
2012	30	17	9	0	20	3

KJCC MANAGEMENT CULTURE

Please indicate the extent to which you agree or disagree with the following statements based on your experiences at KJCC within the past year. If you are no longer employed at KJCC, select your answer based on your experience as an employee.

	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neither Agree nor Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree	No Response
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4. Policies related to safety and security are adequate. (please circle one)

2018	3	9	3	27	4	2
2015	1	5	9	32	7	1
2012	--	--	--	--	--	--

5. Policies related to safety and security are clearly communicated to staff. (please circle one)

2018	3	8	8	22	6	1
2015	3	6	6	32	7	1
2012	12	14	11	33	7	2

6. Policies related to safety and security are consistently enforced by management. (please circle one)

2018	8	13	10	14	3	0
2015	6	8	10	26	3	2
2012	16	18	17	21	5	2

7. Appropriate actions are taken when staff violate policies. (please circle one)

2018	9	12	9	12	4	2
2015	5	10	19	19	1	1
2012	10	14	25	23	3	4

8. I feel intimidated or threatened by my co-workers. (please circle one)

2018	14	22	4	6	2	0
2015	--	--	--	--	--	--
2012	16	36	15	5	4	3

9. I feel intimidated or threatened by management. (please circle one)

2018	13	13	7	8	6	1
2015	--	--	--	--	--	--
2012	--	--	--	--	--	--

10. The safety and security of staff is an important concern of KJCC management. (please circle one)

2018	9	9	10	16	4	0
2015	2	6	9	24	13	1
2012	8	7	18	38	6	2

11. I feel safe working at KJCC. (please circle one)

2018	8	4	13	17	6	0
2015	4	3	11	25	12	0
2012	8	12	16	34	8	1

12. I am concerned about being retaliated against by co-workers. (please circle one)

2018	8	15	9	12	3	1
2015	--	--	--	--	--	--
2012	2	21	25	16	12	3

13. I am concerned about being retaliated against by management. (please circle one)

2018	11	11	7	9	9	1
2015	--	--	--	--	--	--
2012	2	14	20	21	20	2

14. Management's personnel decisions (hiring, promoting, terminating, etc.) are fair. (please circle one)

2018	10	12	11	11	4	0
2015	--	--	--	--	--	--
2012	13	16	35	11	1	3

15. Employee morale at KJCC is high. (please circle one)

2018	12	18	12	6	0	0
2015	9	11	10	23	1	1
2012	24	27	18	7	2	1

16. Employee turnover has had a negative impact on safety and security at KJCC. (please circle one)

2018	1	6	7	20	14	0
2015	3	20	16	10	6	0
2012	3	7	12	36	19	2

17. I am currently seeking other employment. (please circle one)

2018*	12	13	10	4	3	0
2015	--	--	--	--	--	--
2012	14	21	15	17	10	2

** Six 2018 respondents indicated they were not currently employed at KJCC.*

18. I hope to be working at KJCC one year from today. (please circle one)

2018*	1	6	8	13	14	0
2015	--	--	--	--	--	--
2012	7	5	16	31	17	3

** Six 2018 respondents indicated they were not currently employed at KJCC.*

PERSONAL EXPERIENCES

19. a) Within the past year, have you been attacked or assaulted by any KJCC staff, including either co-workers or management? (please mark one)

	Yes	No	No Response
2018	7	41	0
2015	3	50	0
2012	3	72	0

b) If you answered “yes,” do you think the incident was handled appropriately? (please mark one)

	Yes	No	Yes and No
2018	0	5	1
2015	--	--	--
2012	--	--	--

20. Within the past year, did you observe any other incidents or violations of policy that you do not think were handled appropriately? (please mark one)

	Yes	No	No Response
2018	22	23	3
2015	6	48	1
2012	--	--	--

21. Please use the following space to share any other concerns you may have regarding the management culture at the Kansas Juvenile Correctional Complex.

Thank you for completing the survey!

Please place your completed survey in the provided envelope and mail it to us by **Wednesday, October 10, 2018**.

If you have any questions about the survey or would like to talk with an auditor, please call Andy Brienzo, Senior Auditor, at (785) 296-4593 or Chris Clarke, Deputy Post Auditor, at (785) 296-6502. You may also reach them via email at andy.brienzo@lpa.ks.gov or chris.clarke@lpa.ks.gov.

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