

Comments to the Juvenile Justice Policy Oversight Committee
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I begin this brief presentation with information about the number of males and females incarcerated at MYI and York. Figure 1. shows a clear and large decline in the number of 16 and 17-year old incarcerated **males**. For each data point the first of the month DOC count was used.

As you can see, the clear and large decline has been going on for some time. The black lines are calculated trend lines, unaffected by normal statistical fluctuation.

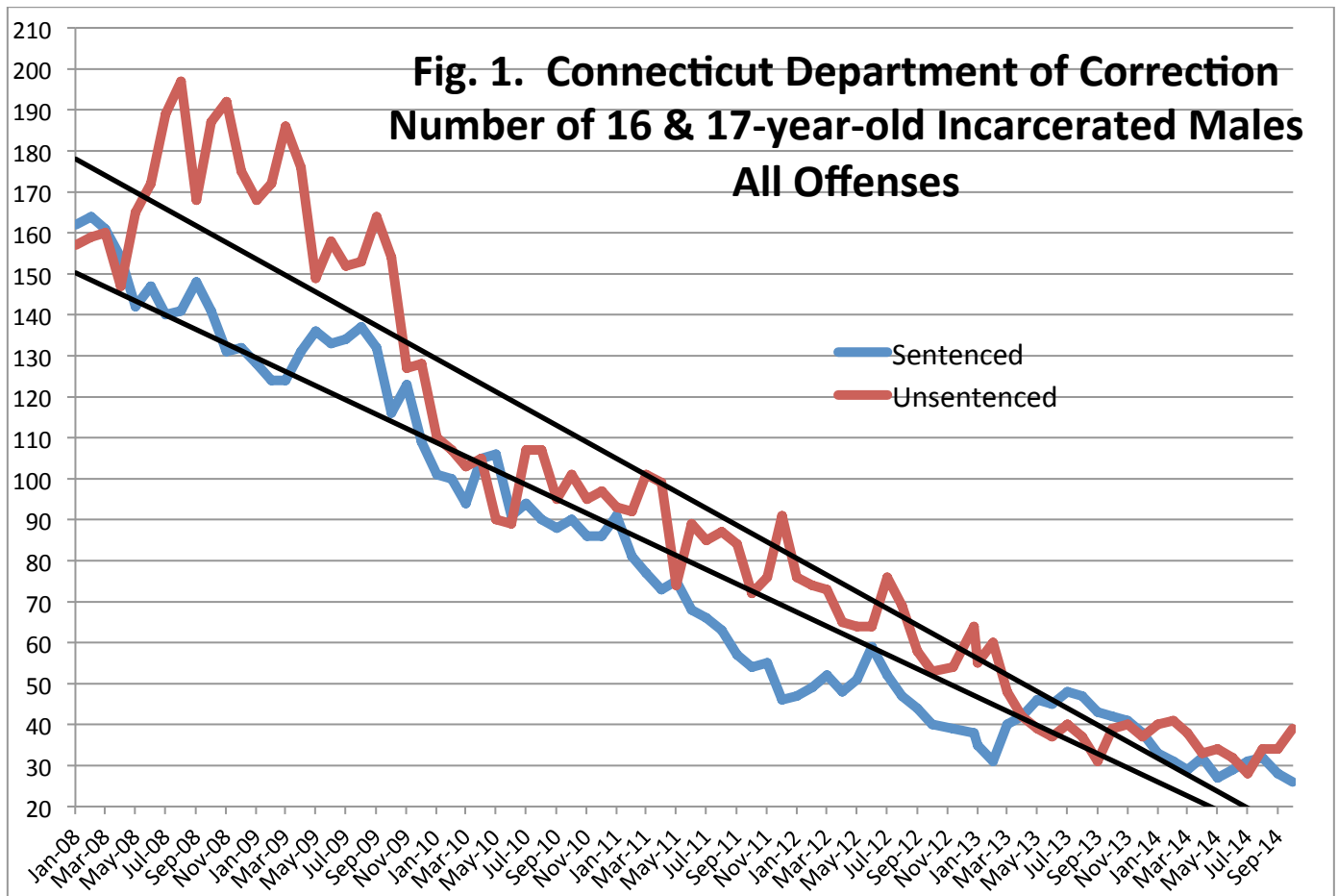
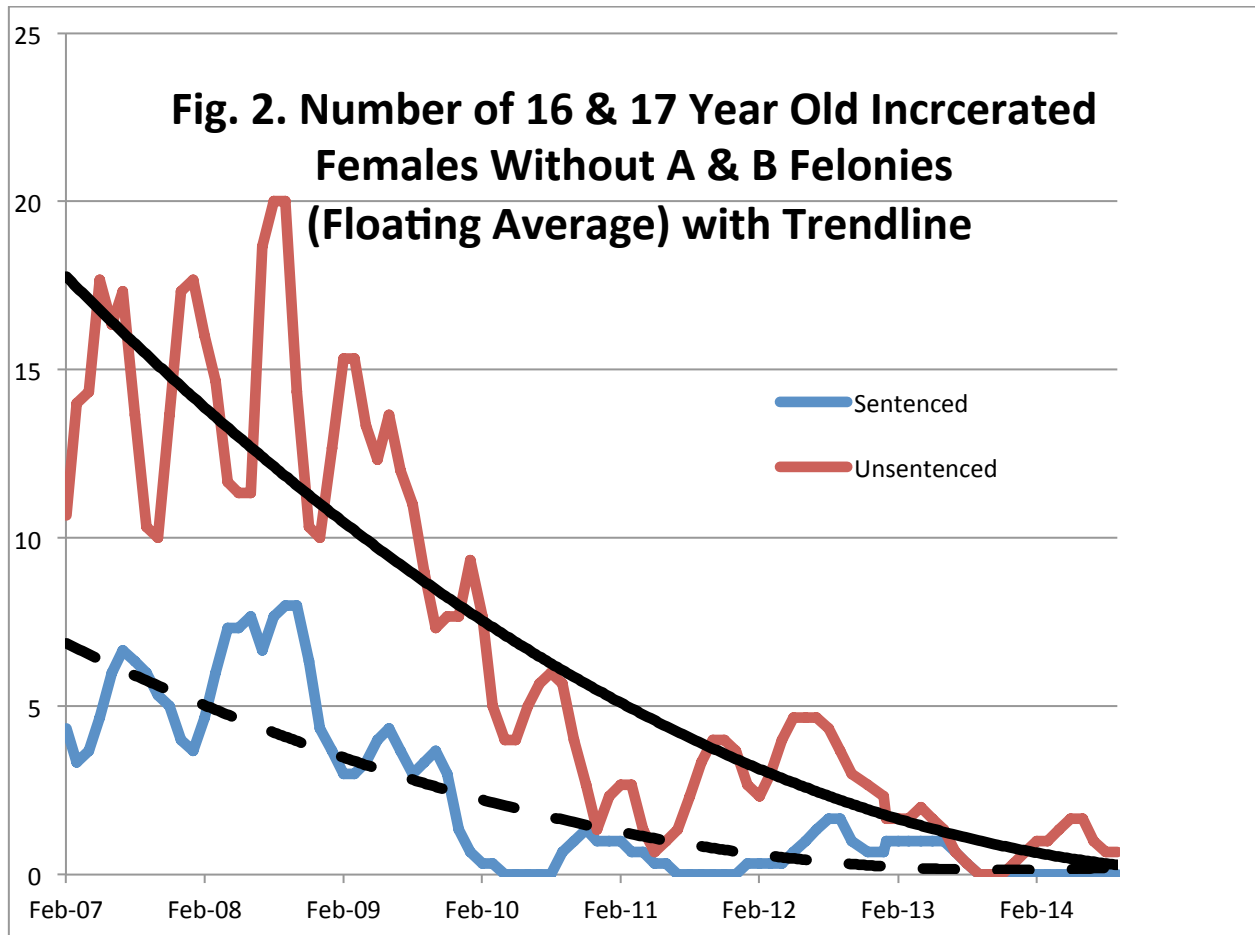


Fig. 2. also shows a clear and large decline in the number of 16 and 17-year-old incarcerated **females**. As with the males, it is apparent that this decline has also been going on for some time.



Although the number of under-18 individuals has declined a great deal, we have been working diligently, with a lot of help from experts outside of the DOC to do everything feasible to improve their experience when they are remanded to our custody and care. Here, for example, are highlights of accomplishments from MYI.

- Beginning in 2011, youthful offender units were created to separate inmates aged 14-16 from older offenders. This was later changed to include inmates aged 14-17. This population is now housed separately from offenders aged 18-21.

- This has proven successful in the reduction of SRG designations and inmate fights because the younger population is less likely to be influenced and motivated to misbehave due to the influence of older offenders.
- In addition, MYI established teams that create management plans to help those with behavioral problems. The results are reflected in the following behavioral indicators. As you can see, the declines are very large.

Table 1. Behavioral Indicators-MYI, 2008-2013

	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	% Change
Total Incidents	1696	1504	1131	1132	1133	1018	
Total Use of Force	29	44	26	19	16	16	-44.8%
Total contraband	31	32	13	9	12	12	-61.3%
Class A	924	1027	744	654	608	460	-50.2%
Class B	694	689	557	439	431	272	-60.8%
Class C	59	53	26	12	15	5	-91.5%
Total DRs	1677	1769	1327	1105	1054	737	-56.1%
Staff Assaults	11	13	14	16	10	8	-27.3%
Inmate fights	188	202	143	128	128	100	-46.8%
SRG Designations	30	27	58	50	50	15	-50.0%

- In order to help us understand what might be at the root of their misbehavior, minors are assessed using the Massachusetts Youth Screening Instrument-Version 2 (MAYSI). This screening instrument was designed to assess young offenders who may have special mental health needs.
- Beginning a decade ago, a series of other changes were made at MYI.
 - School hours were increased to five hours a day.
 - Outdoor recreation time was increased.
 - Whenever we have no choice but to place the individual on some kind of restrictive status, great efforts are made not to interrupt the minor's education. For example, when individuals under the age of 18 are on some form of restrictive status teachers are deployed to these sites.
- Here are other specific changes that have already been instituted at MYI:

- Disciplinary Reports are now adjudicated within 2 business days.
- Sanctions do not exceed 5 business days with a plan to return to general population before the 5th day.
- The Office of Child Advocate and Department of Children and Families staff now have full access to each offender under their care and may be involved in Unit Team meetings, PPT's, and Programs and Treatment Planning Meetings unless prohibited by HIPAA regulations.
- Parents of offenders and prior school district staff are offered the opportunity to attend all PPT meetings.
- All offenders 14-17 years of age on CTQ status now continue to receive education during regular business days with a goal of returning the offender to a group school setting as soon as possible.

- The Office of Child Advocate and Department of Children and Families now has input and may make recommendations on all programming conducted outside of the regular school day.

- Beyond these completed changes, there are other **efforts that are now ongoing.**
- We are working to train all staff who are involved with managing youthful offenders. There is a particular focus on training staff to understand how children and youth offenders are different than adults.
- Mindful of the importance of families in the lives of minors we are moving to the point in which loss of visits will no longer be a sanction for minors.
- Given these age differences, training will then focus on how this translates to effectively manage these individuals.
- In addition to applying this knowledge to specific individuals, staff at all levels will consider what policies and practices should be different than standard policies and practices in adult correctional settings. Examples have already been discussed above.

- We are moving to the point when no inmates 14-17 will be placed in a restrictive housing unit.
- We are working toward approving re-entry furloughs for minors with two years or less left on their sentence to attend community-based school and/or community-based programs.

- **Longer term goals**
 - MYI has engaged a number of stakeholders to identify and strategize about what other steps could be taken to improve even more our policies and practice. MYI has taken very seriously how useful engagement with stakeholders can be in establishing longer-term goals. These will not be established by MYI decree, but will emerge in collaboration with MYI partners. Here are some examples of these efforts:
 - **A Re-Entry Committee** has been established to identify needs and services to help minors re-integrate into their communities. The membership includes MYI leadership, representatives from the Public Defenders Office, Center for Children’s Advocacy, Connecticut Managed Health Care (CMHC), Unified District #1, Probation, Parole, a DOC Discharge Planner, and representatives from the Department of Children and Families.
 - **An Adolescent Workgroup** was formed to discuss adolescent development, the needs of adolescents, and to explicitly use this insight as a lens through which we will fine-tune what we are doing with adolescents in our care and custody. The workgroup includes MYI leadership, representatives from CMHC, representatives from the Office of the Child Advocate, MYI and York Unit Management, and representatives from the DOC Standards and Policy Unit (which

helps formalize new policies and practices into Administrative and Unit Directives).

- Some individuals present MYI with challenges because they present behavioral management issues, have certain medical, educational, and/or mental health issues, or due to conflicts of various kinds with other inmates need to be specially managed. In order to address these problems in a holistic way and timely manner, an **Inter-Disciplinary Committee** meets at least twice monthly. The committee includes the Warden, the individual's Unit Manager, the Deputy Warden of Rehabilitative Services, the Principal or Assistant Principal of MYI's school, a DCF liaison, the MYI Disciplinary Investigator, and MYI Unit Management and Leadership. They work together to understand the issues that need to be addressed and to develop an appropriate treatment and management strategy.
- As noted previously, a concerted effort is made to develop responses other than the imposition of sanctions. A **Multi-Disciplinary Team Committee** reviews disciplinary reports on a daily basis to come to a consensus about what would constitute a meaningful and appropriate sanction. MYI is, as is York, committed to the principle of progressive discipline. Data reported above strongly suggest these efforts, taken together, are bearing fruit.

York C.I.

York has made many of the same changes that MYI has made. The following table shows some of the same declines in behavioral problems that were reported by MYI. The numbers are so small that it is easier to understand the presentation by just presenting counts.

Table 2. Behavioral Indicators-York C.I. - Ages Less than 18--2008-2013

	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013
Total Use of Force	1	3	1	0	11	0
Total contraband	0	1	0	0	0	0
Class A	13	22	8	2	33	2
Class B	5	14	6	2	2	6
Class C	0	0	0	0	0	0
Total DRs	18	36	14	4	35	8
Staff Assaults	0	1	0	0	6	0
Inmate fights	4	5	3	0	0	0
SRG Designations	1	3	0	0	0	0
2012 data reflects one extremely disruptive inmate. E.g. 5 of 6 assaults on staff were committed by her.						

Moving on, for the sake of brevity, what follows are some of the changes that York has made that differ in some way from those made at MYI. Unlike MYI, at York staff needs to attend to not only age-related issues, but gender-related issues.

- There are several things that should be mentioned about female offenders, versus male offenders.
 - In general terms, it is more likely that one way or another mental health and/or substance abuse disorders are likely to have played a role in their getting incarcerated.
 - In addition, although trauma plays more of a role in the histories of male offenders than previously thought, it remains a more prevalent problem in the histories of females. Therefore, York staff is trained to be trauma-informed. This starts with admission.

- Admission procedures for minor females:
 - Minor females are monitored closely and are housed separately.
 - As with all females admitted to York they are given a mental health assessment. Minors are assessed using the MAYSI. As noted previously this screening instrument was designed to assess young offenders who may have special mental health needs.

- Having established an initial treatment plan, each person is seen weekly by a licensed professional counselor whose initial task is to monitor those issues identified by the screening, and to address the person's adaptation to the facility. This includes being very attentive to suicide risk.
 - Mindful of the importance of family support, every effort is made to facilitate communication between the family and the inmate.
 - Minors also attend a therapy group twice a week. Other minors, with the guidance of the licensed professional counselor, can be a great source of support in these groups as these minors adapt to being incarcerated.
- **York Behavior Incentive Program**
 - An important behavior modification principle is that the best way to improve behavior is to use much more positive reinforcement than negative reinforcement. This principle is reflected in a program that allows students to earn points during the school day based on good behavior and positive engagement in their studies.

- **DCF Involvement**

York's DCF liaison ensures that a weekly telephone call is afforded to the Youthful offender allowing her to make contact with an appropriate adult. Department of Children and Families also afford each DCF involved Youthful offender a \$ 50 stipend every month which the offender can use to purchase commissary.

- **Progressive Discipline**

- Progressive discipline is utilized in all cases.
- In the event that formal discipline is required, Youthful offenders are afforded a Disciplinary Advocate to ensure that the youthful offender fully understands the disciplinary process that she is undergoing. When sanctions are issued every effort is made to ensure that the youthful offender does not receive loss of visitation. York staff

strongly support family reunification and encourage and foster the continued relationship with a Youthful offender's family through visitation, telephone communication and mail when appropriate, consistent of course with court and DCF guidelines.

- **Additional programs for youthful offenders**

- Life Skills
- Art Therapy
- 7 Challenges (an addiction services based group).
- In addition to the physical education received in school during the day Youthful offenders receive gym recreation in the evening.
- Cosmetology services that involve visits to our cosmetology department, helping to promote self esteem as well as helpful these young females to be well groomed.
- Bible study and church services are available if anyone wants to practice her religious beliefs.
- Comprehensive re-entry services are provided:

Re-Entry

York's Re-Entry efforts are accessible to our Youthful offender population. Their Re-Entry Team meets monthly and consists of the Deputy Warden of Programs and Treatment, a Counselor Supervisor, a Re-Entry Counselor, a Discharge Planner, and a State School Teacher.

In addition to this, The Unified District #1 affords youthful offenders that are within 6 months of discharge, Re-Entry classes. This class is a 7 week program that the youth attends daily. This class includes helping her consider and access continuing education options, working on resume preparation, and enhancing job readiness skills.

If a youthful offender returns to the facility following her release, this is used as a teachable moment. She is included in a quarterly meeting that is held to address others who have recently returned following release. In this group program staff help these young offenders make their next release a success.

Counselors use what they learn in this process to improve programming help others facing release. During this meeting, York C.I. Addiction Services and Re-Entry Counselors collaborate with various Departments such as Parole and Probation as well as various Policy Planners.

There is much more to share. Both wardens extend a cordial invitation to visit their facilities to learn more about their work with minors remanded to our care and custody.

If you have any questions about MYI you can contact Warden John Alves at John.Alves@ct.gov. If you have questions about York you can contact Stephen.facher@ct.gov. If you have general questions please don't hesitate to contact Patrick Hynes at Patrick.Hynes@ct.gov

ⁱ This is a revision of the presentation with slight additions and corrections.