
Facility Inspection Report

Name and Location of Facility:	Oklahoma School of Science and Mathematics 1141 N Lincoln Blvd, Oklahoma City, OK 73104
Date of Visit:	April 4, 2024
Oversight Reviewers:	Harold Jergenson & Raegan Qualls, Oversight Specialists
Focus of Visit:	Unannounced Oversight, 2024
Date of Report:	August 29, 2024

Introduction

On April 4, 2024, the Office of Juvenile System Oversight (OJSO) conducted an unannounced visit to the Oklahoma School of Science and Mathematics (OSSM) to evaluate compliance with established responsibilities and regulations. The school, which has a capacity of 144 students, had a census of 93 students on the day of the visit.

The resumption of mandatory oversight inspections at OSSM was initiated by a decision at the Oklahoma Commission on Children and Youth (OCCY) meeting held on January 26, 2024, in accordance with 10 O.S. § 600 and 10 O.S. § 601.6. In preparation for these inspections, the OJSO, including the agency's Executive Director, Assistant Director, and an OJSO Supervisor, met with the OSSM President and Dean of Academics on February 12, 2024. This meeting served to discuss the oversight process, introduce the roles of OCCY and OJSO, and establish expectations for future oversight visits. The meeting also included a guided tour of OSSM's facilities and grounds.

Interviews Conducted

During the visit, OJSO conducted several interviews to gather information from key stakeholders:

- **Entry Interview:** President and Dean of Academics
- **Student Interviews:** Eight students
- **Staff Interviews:** Four staff members

Documents Reviewed

The following documents were reviewed as part of the assessment:

- Current staff roster, including job titles and employment dates
- Student roster
- Eight student files

- Four staff files
- OSSM Student Handbook 2023-2024
- OSSM Residence Life Duty Definitions
- OSSM Behavior Attendance Audit Reports (August 18, 2023 - April 4, 2024)
- OSSM Student Incident Reports (August 18, 2023 - March 31, 2024)
- OSSM Employee Handbook (February 15, 2024)
- OSSM Resident Hall Manual (June 2022)
- Oklahoma State Department of Health Inspection report (March 5, 2024)
- Various OSSM Hood Kitchen Suppression System Inspection reports and FA_FS Alarm and Detection Equipment reports (dated August 2023)
- OSSM Fire Extinguisher (FX) Inspection (August 1, 2023)
- OSSM Residence Hall Housing Contract Terms and Conditions 2024-2025

Findings

Areas Toured

On February 12, 2024, the OCCY Executive Director, Assistant Director, and OJSO Supervisor were given a guided tour of OSSM by the President. The following areas were inspected:

- OSSM classrooms
- Science labs
- Kitchen and Great Hall (dining area)
- Residence Hall dormitories and dayrooms
- Security pod in the Residence Hall
- Facility grounds
- Live video surveillance of facility grounds and Residence Hall Basement (recreation room)

Student Interviews

The OJSO interviewed eight students who provided feedback on their experiences at OSSM:

- Students generally felt safe and supported by their teachers.
- Students expressed a positive outlook on their peers and teachers.
- Maintenance issues, including HVAC problems and insect infestations, were noted but were reported as being promptly addressed.
- Some students expressed discomfort with sharing dorm rooms.

No significant concerns were identified during the student interviews.

Staff Interviews

The OJSO interviewed four staff members, focusing on employment responsibilities, staff training, campus safety, and employee actions regarding inappropriate behavior. No significant concerns were identified during these interviews.

It was noted during the entry interview that Resident Advisors (RAs) or “dorm parents” play a significant role in student supervision. RAs, primarily post-graduate students from a local university, are not OSSM employees and have no formal contractual relationship with OSSM. The OSSM President indicated that a formal employment or contractual agreement for all RAs would be implemented by the 2024-2025 school year.

Student File Reviews

The OJSO reviewed eight student files and found no concerns.

Staff File Reviews

The OJSO reviewed four staff files and found no concerns.

Student Incident Reporting

The OJSO reviewed reports from the OSSM FaceUp platform from August 18, 2023, through March 31, 2024. FaceUp is an online system allowing students to submit concerns anonymously. FaceUp was a new system implemented in the 2023-2024 school year. According to the OSSM Student Handbook 2023-2024, FaceUp is an online platform that allows the students to submit concerns, complaints or grievances on issues affecting student well-being or academic success. Students may elect to anonymously submit incidents which are then directed to the OSSM President, Vice President for Academic Affairs, and/or the Academic Counselor for resolution. If a student does not feel the incident has been resolved the issue may be elevated to other members of the executive leadership, the Board of Trustees or any member or subcommittee of the Board. The following reports were documented:

- August 2023: No incident reports.
- September 2023: No incident reports.
- October 2023: Two incident reports.
- November 2023: Four incident reports.
- December 2023: Three incident reports.
- January 2024: Four incident reports.
- February 2024: No incident reports.
- March 2024: No incident reports.

Incident reports included issues related to physical plant conditions, academic concerns, and concerns about unfair treatment by OSSM personnel. Of the complaints relating to unfair or uncomfortable treatment four incidents were alleged against one employee during a three month time period. At the time of the OJSO visit in February 2024 this individual was no longer employed at OSSM. While all incidents were marked as resolved, several lacked documentation of the proposed resolution, and none provided the complainant an opportunity to accept or reject the proposed resolution or to elevate the issue if necessary. The average resolution time was 64 days.

Inspection Reports Review

The OJSO reviewed the State Fire Marshal and Oklahoma State Department of Health inspection reports, noting the following:

- **Fire Suppression System:** Five of the 13 alarm/suppression detection panels inspected had yellow tags, indicating operable systems with impairments that do not severely compromise the system's functional operation.
- **Fire Extinguishers:** Eight out of 104 fire extinguishers required hydrostatic testing.
- **Oklahoma State Department of Health Report (March 5, 2024):** No deficiencies found.

Conclusion

During the OJSO's oversight inspection and records review, no health or safety violations were identified. However, the following areas of concern were noted:

1. **Resident Advisor Contracts:** Some RAs were not OSSM employees and had no formal contractual agreement with OSSM at the time of the inspection. OSSM administration has indicated that all RAs will be OSSM employees with contracts by the start of the 2024-2025 school year.
2. **Fire Safety Compliance:** Five alarm/suppression panels were tagged yellow, indicating impairments that do not severely compromise the system's functional operation. Additionally, eight fire extinguishers required hydrostatic testing.
3. **Incident Reporting System:** The OSSM FaceUp platform, while commendable, lacks comprehensive features for grievance resolution, including acknowledgment of complaints, a structured response process, and options for complainants to escalate issues. Also a reasonable timeframe should be established so the average incident resolution is less than 64 days.

The OJSO requests that OSSM provide a response addressing these areas of concern within 30 days.



September 27, 2024

Mark James
Assistant Director
Office of Juvenile Oversight
Oklahoma Commission on Children and Youth
mark.james@occy.ok.gov

RE: Response to the Facility Inspection Report dated August 29, 2024, for the April 4, 2024, oversight visit.

Assistant Director James,

Thank you for visiting the OSSM campus and allowing me to provide you with information about our school and give you a tour of our campus and facilities. As I mentioned to you during your visit, OSSM is consistently ranked in the top one percent of high schools in America. For example, in the fall of 2023, Niche ranked OSSM as the fifth-best public high school in America, and in January of 2024, Wall Street 24/7 ranked OSSM as the second-best high school in America. In addition to these amazing accolades, forty percent of OSSM's current senior class, the class of 2025, were recently recognized as National Merit Scholar Semi-Finalists. As the President of one of America's premier high schools, I strongly value your input on how we can make this high school an even better place for our Oklahoma students.

Thank you for sharing your report from the oversight visit conducted on April 4, 2024, and the opportunity to respond to the report. Please accept the following as OSSM's response to the Facility Inspection Report. Specifically, the three areas of concern identified in the Facility Inspection Report: 1.) Resident Advisor Contracts, 2.) Fire Safety Compliance, and 3.) Incident Reporting System. I respectfully request that this response be incorporated into your final report.

1. Resident Advisor Contracts

Prior to your office's decision to resume oversight visits at OSSM, it was my intent to establish a formal, written agreement with the OSSM Resident Advisors (RAs). For additional context, I am currently serving my second year as the President of OSSM. I noted the need for residence agreements within my first few months in this position and planned to revise, enhance, and solidify the employment relationship with the Residence Hall staff for the upcoming school year, with assistance from OSSM's legal counsel.

On Thursday, July 18, 2024, the OSSM Governing Board unanimously approved the OSSM Residence Hall Housing Contract. As noted on page 2 of your report, this housing contract has been provided to you for your records. Effective August 9, 2024, RAs are officially OSSM employees and subject to a formal housing contract.



2. Fire Safety Compliance

Our fire protection systems provider is scheduled for October 2, 2024. They will troubleshoot and repair yellow-tagged fire alarm panels and hydrostatic test fire extinguishers. Afterward, the fire marshal will visit campus to validate the repairs and tests.

3. Incident Reporting System

As noted in your report, the FaceUp platform was implemented at OSSM in the 2023-24 school year. Specifically, in September of 2023, FaceUp reporting was added to supplement in-person and email reporting options. FaceUp serves as a communication tool for both employees and students to submit concerns and other information to OSSM's executive staff. Since FaceUp is a relatively new tool for the school, we are continuing to look into ways to improve and further develop its use within the grievance process.

The FaceUp platform allows for the acknowledgment of complaints within its system. The FaceUp platform contains an anonymity option. Within the FaceUp platform, the complainants are issued a code that enables them to access responses to their grievances all while maintaining their anonymity. The use of codes, while not preferable to direct responses to complainants, is made necessary when complainants submit anonymously.

FaceUp is simply a communication option for students and employees. FaceUp is not the grievance process; FaceUp is a tool used as part of the process. The Grievance Resolution Process can be found on page 27 in the Employee Handbook and the process for resolution of student complaints can be found on page 23 in the Student Handbook. As noted on page 2 of your report, the Employee Handbook and the Student Handbook have been provided to you for your records.

As the president of OSSM, I serve on the committees that receive FaceUp grievances, including grievances from both students and employees. I am immediately sent all communications submitted through the FaceUp platform. My immediate involvement demonstrates the fact that OSSM takes all grievances seriously. For details regarding further escalation after review by the grievance committee, please refer to the Student and Employee Handbooks.

The resolution timeframe depends on the nature of the complaint. The average resolution time referred to in the OJSO's report was heavily skewed because the complaints regarded OSSM employees which required extensive investigation, review by OSSM's legal counsel, and, ultimately, HR actions. While OSSM strives to resolve complaints as quickly as possible, OSSM must still comply with state employment laws, including the discipline process. For comparison, the last five (5) student grievances have been resolved in an average of 5.6 days. As you are likely aware, a reasonable timeframe will depend on the nature of the grievance. Furthermore, we



intentionally do not automatically close out a grievance upon resolution in order to allow time for the complainant to respond.

Thank you for the opportunity to respond to the areas of concern. If you have any questions or would like any further documentation, please contact me. I am happy to discuss. As you know, the safety of the students and employees at OSSM is my number one priority.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Tony Cornforth".

Tony Cornforth
President, OSSM