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TEXAS YOUTH COMMISSION

2006 REPORT ON CUSTOMER SERVICE

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2006 Report on Customer Service

TEXAS YOUTH COMMISSION

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June 1, 2006

Signed:

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Approved:

The Honorable Pete C. Alfaro, Board Chair

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TEXAS YOUTH COMMISSION 2006 REPORT ON CUSTOMER SERVICE

Inventory of External Customers

Listed on Table 1 are budget strategies with direct service recipients for the Texas Youth Commission (TYC). Service recipients of these budget strategies include the general public, partner States, and TYC-committed youth.

Table 1. Primary Customers by Budget Strategy

Budget Strategy *	Primary Customers
A.1.1: Assessment & Orientation	General Public
A.1.2: Institutional Services	General Public
A.1.3: Contracted Capacity	General Public
A.1.4: Halfway House Services	General Public
A.1.5: Health Care Services	TYC-Committed Youth
A.1.6: Psychiatric Services	TYC-Committed Youth
A.1.7: Construct and Renovate	General Public
B.1.1: Education and Workforce Programs	TYC-Committed Youth
C.1.1: Correctional Treatment	TYC-Committed Youth
C.1.2: Specialized Correctional Treatment	TYC-Committed Youth
C.1.3: Parole Services	TYC-Committed Youth
C.1.4: Interstate Compact	Partner States

* Strategy D.1.1 is an indirect administration strategy and not listed

One general purpose of strategies A.1.1 through A.1.7 is to provide custody and supervision for youth or "protect the public." The value of customer service assessment with the general public in this case is questionable. Few members of the public visit our facilities or have direct contact with TYC staff. Accordingly, we asked juvenile justice professionals (Juvenile Court Judges and Chief Juvenile Probation Officers) to evaluate our services because it is their decisions that commit youth to the agency. As members of the Texas juvenile justice community they are generally familiar with our mission, services, and responsiveness.

Strategies A.1.5 and A.1.6 with B.1.1 through C.1.3 catalog direct services for TYC-committed youth. These strategies generally provide for education and rehabilitation and parents / guardians are presumed to be knowledgeable advocates of their children in TYC custody. Thus we have chosen to survey parents as proxies for youth that receive direct services.

Interstate agreements (Strategy C.1.4) provide parole supervision to TYC-committed youth residing in States other than Texas, supervision of juvenile offenders probated or paroled to Texas from other States, and the return and supervision of runaways crossing state lines. This strategy represents less than one-tenth of one percent of our operating budget. Customer service assessment was not performed.

Methodology

Relevant methodological considerations for TYC customer service survey projects are summarized on Table 2. Two projects were conducted in the winter/spring of 2006: one with Juvenile Court Judges and Chief Juvenile Probation Officers (the "JPO Survey") and the other with parents/guardians of youth in TYC custody or recently discharged (the "Parent Survey"). Survey questions and protocols are unchanged from 2004 to facilitate comparison with previous survey results.

Questions are drawn from suggestions provided by the Legislative Budget Board¹ with modifications dictated by the kinds of services TYC actually provides. For example, our "facilities question" asks about "*safety*" – a primary consideration for operation of juvenile institutions – instead of "*convenience*" as suggested by the template. JPO and Parent Survey packets are presented in Appendix D.

JPO packets were mailed to all Juvenile Court Judges (660) and Chief Juvenile Probation Officers (164) in Texas. The response rate² proved significantly greater than the 10 percent "rule-of-thumb" expected for a mail-out survey without phone follow-up. Some 230 JPO surveys were returned for an overall response rate of 28 percent. Probation chiefs (59 percent) returned surveys at higher rates than judges (20 percent).

Parent survey packets were mailed to 1,000 randomly selected parents/guardians of youth currently in TYC custody or on parole, or discharged during the twelve months prior to survey distribution. Some TYC parents do not read English but do understand Spanish. Hence, explanations and questions for parents were duplicated in both languages. The single page parent questionnaire is in English on one side and Spanish on the reverse. Parents returned 135 completed questionnaires for a response rate of 14 percent.

Interpretation, Analysis and Reporting

The instrument and analytical design of this project have elements that easily pass beneath notice but are significant for understanding results. The first is obvious. Respondents do not answer questions – they react to statements. Consider a probe used in this survey: "*TYC operates safe facilities.*" A respondent has seven ways to reply to this idea. The participant can mark "*Strongly Agree*", "*Agree*", "*Neutral*", "*Disagree*", "*Strongly Disagree*", "*Don't Know*", or leave the answer blank. We draw inferences about the respondent's state of mind based on this choice.

In this example we infer that a check on "*Disagree*" or "*Strongly Disagree*" means that a respondent believes that facilities are unsafe. Alternately, a mark on "*Agree*" or "*Strongly Agree*" endorses a belief that facilities are safe. "*Neutral*" suggests something in between that fails to rise to either positive or negative endorsement, and is an opinion. This is different from choosing "*Don't Know*", a response that is here interpreted as "absence of opinion." Indeed, many respondents explained that they answered "*Don't Know*" when they were unfamiliar with a particular circumstance.

TABLE 2. Survey Specifications:		
Population	Juvenile Court Judges and Chief Juvenile Probation Officers	Parents or Guardians of TYC Youth
Brief Description	Survey was conducted in accordance with agency strategic plan instructions. Survey instrument was adapted from the examples of pre-specified responses to use in customer service surveys and addresses all eight specified service-quality elements.	Survey was conducted in accordance with agency strategic plan instructions. Survey instrument was adapted from the examples of pre-specified responses to use in customer service surveys and addresses all eight specified service-quality elements.
Survey Design	Mail, 100% sample	Mail, random sample of parents/guardians.
Survey Package	Cover memo, questionnaire, self-addressed return envelope.	Cover letter, questionnaire, self-addressed postage-paid return envelope.
Instrument	Single page, standard six point Likert check box matrix, 19 questions, space for comments, English Language.	Single page, primarily standard six point Likert check box matrix, 27 questions, space for comments, English language one side, Spanish language on reverse.
Check Box Elements	"Strongly Agree", "Agree", "Neutral", "Disagree", "Strongly Disagree", and "Don't Know".	"Strongly Agree", "Agree", "Neutral", "Disagree", "Strongly Disagree", and "Don't Know".
Estimated Completion Time	Ten minutes or less.	Ten minutes or less.
Number Mailed	824	1,000
Number Questionnaires Returned	230	135
Response Rate	28%	14%
Additional Comments	Response rates varied between judges & probation chiefs. Of 660 juvenile court judges sent surveys, 130 (20%) returned questionnaires. Of 164 surveys distributed to probation chiefs, 96 were returned for a response rate of 59%.	Sixteen respondents (12%) elected to respond to the Spanish side of the questionnaire and of these, seven (44%) included written comments in Spanish.

Our reporting procedure is built around this structure. We report two categories of response – “those who agree” and “those who disagree”. The percentage of “those who agree” is calculated by compiling endorsements and dividing by the total number of respondents that respond with an opinion. The denominator includes respondents that mark “Neutral” but excludes those who check “Don’t Know”, fail to respond, or mark more than one response category. The proportion of “those who disagree” is calculated similarly on the basis respondents checking “Disagree” or “Strongly Disagree”.

This procedure simplifies presentation of results with minimal loss of information. Though not shown on the Tables, the percentage of respondents that mark “Neutral” is implicit. This is the difference between 100 percent, and the sum of those that agree or disagree. Second, if there is interest in differentiating between respondents that “Strongly Agree” and those that check “Agree”, there is a simple rule of thumb that accurately describes behavior of these survey populations. Of respondents that endorse a query, two-thirds respond with “Agree” and one third respond with “Strongly Agree”. This generalization applies to all JPO and Parent queries.

Results

Juvenile Court Judges and Chief Juvenile Probation Officers

Shown on Table 3 are *endorsements* to customer service assessment questions organized by service quality element. *Endorsement* is defined as agreeing with a "query element" or statement. Results are reported separately for Juvenile Court Judges (judges) and Chief Juvenile Probation Officers (probation chiefs).

Under "*General Measures*" we asked JPO respondents for their reactions to four statements. The first and most noteworthy customer service query is: "*Overall, I am generally satisfied with TYC.*" One may view the inquiries that follow as probes that explore, amplify, and illuminate responses to this central question. Of judges that responded to this survey, 85 percent endorse general satisfaction with TYC and four percent indicate general dissatisfaction. Though not shown on the Table 3, the remaining judges that expressed an opinion checked "*Neutral*" (11 percent). Chief Juvenile Probation Officers responded with a similar pattern of positive reaction, pointing to a high frequency of general satisfaction among JPO respondents.

We also asked JPO respondents about their perceptions of the quality of TYC-provided core services including, rehabilitation, education, and parole. Notice that judges and probation officers endorse these services at similar rates. On the order of three-quarters of JPO respondents believe we provide quality education and rehabilitation services, and on the order of 60 percent endorse the quality of TYC parole services.

We constructed one facility query related both to the TYC mission of providing public protection and the goal of ensuring orderly and safe environment within our facilities: "*TYC operates safe facilities.*" About 80 percent of JPO respondents endorse that TYC facilities are safe, and relatively few JPO respondents (5 percent of judges, 4 percent of probation chiefs) assert that TYC facilities are unsafe. We did not ask questions regarding the convenience of parking lots or public transportation because few juvenile court judges or probation chiefs visit TYC facilities.

The staff- and communications-related queries explored questions of the courtesy, accessibility, and responsiveness of TYC staff. Judges and probation chiefs endorse these queries at rates ranging around 80 percent, and express disagreement at rates ranging between one and four percent. Similar responses were observed on the service timeliness query ("*TYC staff responded promptly to my questions*), suggesting that TYC staff may generally enjoy a reputation of responsiveness and professionalism among juvenile justice professionals.

Concerning complaints, 57 percent of judges and 67 percent of probation chiefs say they "*know how to make a complaint to TYC.*" Sixty-five percent of probation officers and three-quarters of judges are optimistic that "*TYC will address their complaint.*"

Table 3: Customer Service Assessment - Juvenile Court Judges and Chief Juvenile Probation Officers

General Measures	Juvenile Court Judges			Chief Juvenile Probation Officers		
	Agree *	Disagree *	N **	Agree *	Disagree *	N **
1. Overall, I am satisfied with TYC.	85%	4%	102	78%	15%	91
3. TYC provides quality rehabilitation services.	71%	9%	93	69%	14%	80
4. TYC provides quality educational services.	75%	4%	84	80%	8%	79
5. TYC provides quality parole services.	56%	15%	85	59%	24%	86
Facilities						
2. TYC operates safe facilities.	82%	5%	88	80%	4%	74
Staff						
9. TYC staff were courteous.	82%	1%	84	84%	1%	91
Communications						
6. I have been able to contact TYC when I have had questions.	79%	4%	85	86%	2%	91
7. TYC staff were able to answer my questions.	73%	2%	83	80%	5%	92
Complaint-handling process						
10. I know how to make a complaint regarding TYC programs or services.	57%	26%	77	68%	14%	80
11. I believe TYC will address my complaint.	76%	7%	85	65%	7%	84
Internet Site						
14. I have access to the Internet.	95%	3%	108	96%	2%	94
15. I have visited the TYC homepage on the Internet	42%	48%	92	79%	15%	89
16. The TYC homepage contains information that assists me in my job. ***	71%	0%	38	78%	4%	69
Service timeliness						
8. TYC staff responded promptly to my questions.	71%	5%	85	84%	3%	92
Printed Information						
12. I have received printed information explaining TYC correctional and rehabilitation services.	59%	28%	88	57%	30%	84
13. The printed information was clear and understandable. ****	96%	0%	51	98%	0%	48
17. I have received juvenile delinquency prevention information from TYC.	34%	30%	80	31%	40%	77
18. The juvenile delinquency prevention information was helpful in my job. *****	71%	0%	38	83%	3%	29

Notes:

* Some respondents answered "neutral." The percentage who "agree" and "disagree" does not add to 100%. The percentage who respond "neutral" can be computed as follows: (100% - (% agree + % disagree))

**N = Number responding to item with an opinion ("strongly agree", "agree", "neutral", "disagree", "strongly disagree")

Excludes respondents who "don't know" or do not answer question.

*** Based on respondents who have visited the TYC homepage. See above.

**** Based on respondents who have received TYC-provided printed information. See above.

***** Based on respondents who have received TYC-provided prevention information. See above.

Three questions address the TYC Internet site. Internet access among JPO respondents is near universal with over 90 percent reporting such access. However probation officers (79 percent) are more likely than judges (42 percent) to report visiting the TYC homepage. Of JPO respondents who have

visited the TYC homepage on the order of two-thirds believe it "contains information that assists ...in their job."

Judges and probation officers report receipt of "printed information explaining TYC correctional and rehabilitation service" at similar rates. Juvenile justice professionals who have received printed information from TYC almost universally endorse that such material is "clear and understandable."

Comparison of JPO Survey Results: 2004 and 2006

Comparisons of 2004 and 2006 endorsements to JPO customer service questions are presented in Table 4. "Percent change" is a rate computed by subtracting the 2004 result from the 2006 result, and dividing by the 2004 result. It is a measure of rate change in endorsement rates from 2004 to 2006.

Table 4: Customer Service Assessment - Comparison of 2004 and 2006 JPO Survey Results						
General Measures	Juvenile Court Judges			Chief Juvenile Probation Officers		
	2004	2006	% Change	2004	2006	% Change
1. Overall, I am satisfied with TYC.	90%	85%	-5%	83%	78%	-7%
3. TYC provides quality rehabilitation services.	82%	71%	-13%	72%	69%	-4%
4. TYC provides quality educational services.	82%	75%	-8%	78%	80%	3%
5. TYC provides quality parole services.	61%	56%	-8%	59.2%	59.3%	0.1%
Facilities						
2. TYC operates safe facilities.	88%	82%	-7%	84%	80%	-6%
Staff						
9. TYC staff were courteous.	82%	82%	1%	89%	84%	-6%
Communications						
6. I have been able to contact TYC when I have had questions.	79%	79%	0%	92%	86%	-7%
7. TYC staff were able to answer my questions.	76%	73%	-3%	84%	80%	-5%
Complaint-handling process						
10. I know how to make a complaint regarding TYC programs or services.	66%	57%	-13%	74%	68%	-8%
11. I believe TYC will address my complaint.	79%	76%	-3%	67%	65%	-2%
Internet Sites						
14. I have access to the Internet.	93%	95%	3%	99%	96%	-3%
15. I have visited the TYC homepage on the Internet	33%	42%	29%	82%	79%	-4%
16. The TYC homepage contains information that assists me in my job. ***	68%	71%	5%	80%	78%	-2%
Service timeliness						
8. TYC staff responded promptly to my questions.	77%	71%	-8%	83%	84%	1%
Printed Information						
12. I have received printed information explaining TYC correctional and rehabilitation services.	62%	59%	-4%	48%	57%	19%
13. The printed information was clear and understandable. ****	90%	96%	7%	96%	98%	2%
17. I have received juvenile delinquency prevention information from TYC.	42%	34%	-20%	27%	31%	16%
18. The juvenile delinquency prevention information was helpful in my job. *****	80%	71%	-11%	81%	83%	3%

Notes:
 *** Based on respondents who have visited the TYC homepage. See above.
 **** Based on respondents who have received TYC-provided printed information. See above.
 ***** Based on respondents who have received TYC-provided prevention information. See above.

JPO Survey Comments

Sixty-three JPO respondents (28 percent) provided written comments on their completed questionnaire. Of these, thirteen proved "explanatory". For example, a judge offered that: *"I am a District Judge w/Juvenile jurisdiction but actually have very little actual experience with the system."* Another fifteen comments proved "laudatory", either congratulating TYC for the job we do or commending specific TYC staff for their efforts. The remaining 33 comments were "constructive." That is, the written response identified one or more areas of concern or provided a suggestion for improvement. The two areas eliciting the greatest number of comments were parole services and intakes; areas that by their nature require complex interactions with non-TYC juvenile justice professionals. Other comments addressed issues such as calls for information or concerns about funding levels for TYC-provided services.

Parents and Guardians of TYC Youth

Three parent survey questions address demographic characteristics. As might be expected, most parent survey respondents (91 percent) are female – mothers and grandmothers of TYC-committed youth. Parents self-identified ethnicity as follows: *"Anglo"* (22 percent); *"African-American"* (34 percent); *"Hispanic"* (34 percent), and; *"Other"* (6 percent). Five respondents elected not to answer this question. A plurality of respondents (47 percent) identified themselves as 35 to 44 years of age. An additional 28 percent of respondents are 45 to 54 years of age, with 15 percent age 55 or older. A few respondents (7 percent) indicate that they are less than 35 years of age.

We asked parents to identify the number of times they had visited a Texas Youth Commission facility. Of parent respondents 19 percent claim *"never"* to have visited, 23 percent had visited one or two times, 29 percent had visited three to ten times, and 26 percent claim visiting TYC facilities more than ten times.

Shown on Table 5 are parent responses to the customer service survey. Again, questions are organized by order of service quality element. Notice that many Parent Survey queries overlap with the JPO survey, but others are unique to the parent survey.

Seven *"General Measure"* inquiries were presented to parents beginning with *"Overall, I am satisfied with TYC."* Fifty-nine percent of parents endorsed this proposition, signaling overall satisfaction. Twenty-one percent of parents disagreed, indicating active dissatisfaction.

Three *"General Measures"* inquires concern core services. About 80 percent of parents endorse the quality of our education services, and on the order of two-thirds endorse the quality of rehabilitation services and parole services.

"Resocialization" refers to the specific procedures and curriculum employed throughout the TYC system to promote rehabilitation. Three-quarters of parents endorse that *"The Resocialization program helps youth build better lives."* Nearly all parents (98 percent) believe that *"Parents and TYC should work together..."* and seventy-one percent endorse that *"Parents and TYC currently work together well."*

Table 5: Customer Service Assessment - Parents/Guardians of TYC-Committed Youth

General Measures	Agree *	Disagree *	N **
8. Overall, I am satisfied with TYC.	59%	21%	126
10. TYC provides quality rehabilitation services.	69%	17%	113
11. TYC provides quality educational services.	81%	9%	117
12. TYC provides quality parole services.	66%	16%	91
22. Parents and TYC should work together to help rehabilitate youth.	98%	0%	129
23. Parents and TYC currently work together well.	71%	13%	112
25. The Resocialization program helps youth build better lives.	75%	15%	106
Facilities			
9. TYC operates safe facilities.	70%	13%	113
Staff			
16. TYC staff were courteous.	80%	7%	123
21. I have been treated with respect by TYC staff.	87%	6%	126
Communications			
13. I have been able to contact TYC with my questions.	74%	15%	118
14. TYC staff were able to answer my questions.	71%	14%	119
24. I understand the TYC Resocialization program.	75%	14%	105
27. I feel well informed about what is happening with my child in TYC.	65%	22%	127
Complaint-handling process			
17. I know how to make a complaint to TYC.	79%	11%	94
18. I believe TYC will address my complaint.	68%	16%	101
Internet Sites			
5. I have Internet access at home or at work	41%	59%	129
6. I have visited the TYC homepage on the Internet	19%	81%	131
26. The TYC Internet homepage helped me understand more about TYC. ***	57%	22%	23
Service timeliness			
15. TYC staff responded promptly to my questions.	69%	21%	120
Printed Information			
19. I received printed information explaining TYC policies, procedures, and programs.	89%	4%	121
20. The printed information was clear. ****	93%	3%	108

Notes:

* Some respondents answered "neutral." The percentage who "agree" and "disagree" does not add to 100%.

The percentage who respond "neutral" can be computed as follows: (100% - (% agree + % disagree))

** N = Number responding to query with an opinion ("strongly agree", "agree", "neutral", "disagree", or "strongly disagree".) Excludes respondents who "don't know" or do not answer question.

*** Based on respondents who have visited the TYC homepage. See above.

**** Based on respondents who have received TYC-provided printed information. See above.

Somewhat fewer parents (70 percent) than judges (82 percent) or probation chiefs (80 percent) believe TYC facilities are safe. This difference in perception may partially account for the observed difference in overall satisfaction among parent and JPO survey respondents. Parents, particularly of newly committed youth, are typically worried about the physical safety of youth in TYC facilities.

About four out of five parents endorse that they are "*courteously*" (80 percent) or "*respectfully*" (87 percent) treated by TYC staff but parents appear less confident about communications, complaint handling, and service timeliness. Notice that 65 percent agree that they "*feel well informed about what is happening to their child in TYC.*" Of parents, two-thirds believe that "*TYC will address their complaint*" and 69 percent agree that "*TYC staff responded promptly to my questions.*"

Just over 40 percent of TYC parents report Internet access and 19 percent claim they have visited the TYC web site. Of parent homepage visitors 57 percent agree that our web site is useful. Nearly all parents (89 percent) report receipt of printed information from TYC. Of those who have received printed materials 93 percent endorse the clarity of the information.

Comparison of Parent Survey Results: 2004 and 2006

Shown on Table 6 is a 2004 and 2006 endorsements to Parent customer service questions. "Percent change" is a rate computed by subtracting the 2004 result from the 2006 result, and dividing by the 2004 result.

Parent Comments

Parents (70 – 52 percent of respondents) included written comments on returned questionnaires at much higher rates than judges and probation chiefs (28 percent). Of parent comments, twenty-three (33 percent) were laudatory. That is, they endorsed TYC without offering constructive criticism.³ "*Thank you TYC for rehabilitating my son!*" is an example of a laudatory comment received in 2006. Other parents offered commendations to specific facilities, or staff that they felt had been particularly helpful to their child. For example, "*My son's case-worker is the best [and] will call to inform us of my son's behavior – good or bad ...*"

Six written comments (9 percent) were explanatory – they explained something about the response, or a circumstance, without expressing an opinion about TYC. For example one parent wrote, "*I don't know about the parole services or the Resocialization program because my son isn't there yet.*"

Forty-one comments (59 percent) were constructive. These comments addressed a range of issues but one area accounted for nearly one-third of complaints. Thirteen comments addressed issues related to problematic communications. "*I do not get feedback right away. It sometimes takes an e-mail then a phone call...*" is a typical example of this type of comment. Seven parents expressed concerns about failed rehabilitation. "*My child came back worse, cursing, and mad at the whole world*" is an example. Seven other parents were concerned about various aspects of visitation and the remainder

of comments covered a variety of concerns including issues with TYC facilities and/or staff.

Table 6: Customer Service Assessment - Comparison of 2004 and 2006 Parent Survey Results			
General Measures	2004	2006	% Change*
8. Overall, I am satisfied with TYC.	65%	59%	-11%
10. TYC provides quality rehabilitation services.	67%	69%	3%
11. TYC provides quality educational services.	77%	81%	5%
12. TYC provides quality parole services.	63%	66%	4%
22. Parents and TYC should work together to help rehabilitate youth.	94%	98%	4%
23. Parents and TYC currently work together well.	66%	71%	7%
25. The Resocialization program helps youth build better lives.	74.5%	75.5%	1%
Facilities			
9. TYC operates safe facilities.	63%	70%	10%
Staff			
16. TYC staff were courteous.	79%	80%	1%
21. I have been treated with respect by TYC staff.	80%	87%	8%
Communications			
13. I have been able to contact TYC with my questions.	69%	74%	6%
14. TYC staff were able to answer my questions.	68%	71%	4%
24. I understand the TYC Resocialization program.	73%	75%	3%
27. I feel well informed about what is happening with my child in TYC.	61%	65%	6%
Complaint-handling process			
17. I know how to make a complaint to TYC.	72%	79%	8%
18. I believe TYC will address my complaint.	67%	68%	2%
Internet Sites			
5. I have Internet access at home or at work	34%	41%	18%
6. I have visited the TYC homepage on the Internet	21%	19%	-12%
26. The TYC Internet homepage helped me understand more about TYC. ***	69%	57%	-22%
Service timeliness			
15. TYC staff responded promptly to my questions.	55%	69%	20%
Printed Information			
19. I received printed information explaining TYC policies, procedures, and programs.	88%	89%	1%
20. The printed information was clear. ****	93%	93%	-0.8%

Notes:

* Change calculated as (2006 rate - 2004 rate)/2004 rate.

*** Based on respondents who have visited the TYC homepage. See above.

**** Based on respondents who have received TYC-provided printed information. See above.

Discussion

It is difficult to provide an objective standard for customer service performance but the Comptroller's office reported in 1997 that of respondents to a web-based survey, "64 percent rated state government customer service as either excellent or good, and 36 percent rated its service fair or bad."⁴ They judged this result both "heartening" and indicative of "room for improvement." We begin our discussion with the Comptroller's measured judgment in mind.

Juvenile Court Judges and Chief Juvenile Probation Officers are the juvenile justice professionals that make the difficult decision to commit a youth to TYC. This decision is not taken lightly. There is a clear preference to retain youthful offenders in the community whenever possible. Only three percent of apprehended juvenile offenders – those most problematic for the community – are ever committed to TYC. It is therefore heartening that on the order of 80 percent of juvenile justice professionals responding to our survey indicated they are generally satisfied with our work.

There is also always "room-for-improvement", and since the survey was last taken 2004, it would appear that for JPO respondents this room has become slightly larger. Between 2004 and 2006 there was among juvenile justice professionals responding to this survey a moderate decline in perceptions of quality of TYC core services including rehabilitation, education, and parole. There was also a modest decline in the percentage of JPO respondents who endorse that our facilities are safe, with a small decline in the percentage of JPO respondents who are generally satisfied with TYC. While this (or any) survey will not permit us to identify cause and effect, these changes in reporting patterns correspond to changes in patterns of response to communications, complaint-handling, and printed information queries. As compared to 2004, there have been moderate declines in the percentage of 2006 JPO respondents who indicate that they have been able to contact TYC when they have had questions, and that TYC staff have been able to answer their questions. Fewer indicate that they know how to make a complaint to TYC, and slightly fewer were confident that TYC will address this complaint. Among judges, fewer indicate that they had received printed information or juvenile delinquency prevention information from TYC.

Parents and guardians of TYC-committed youth present a different and more complicated picture. There are deep structural reasons for parents to be dissatisfied. Parental aspirations rarely include seeing one's child in serious trouble with the law. It is likely that many parents regard their child's commitment as personal heartbreak. Families are inevitably disrupted when youth are taken from their homes. Texas is a large state and some youth are sent to State Schools located far from their residence. When confined in institutions, phone contacts and visiting are regulated. Families are investigated to determine whether children can return home while under TYC custody: at any given time about 16 percent of TYC-committed youth have "disapproved homes." Each year on the order of 18 percent of youth discharged from TYC are discharged directly to adult prison. We collect child

support from parents when so ordered by the court. These are statutory duties and we are charged with carrying them out. But we understand that these obligations and circumstances cause unavoidable stress for families – and help provide a basis for understanding parental responses to this customer service survey project.

We surveyed at random and undoubtedly some survey packets arrived in mailboxes of parents whose children had been transferred to prison. Others likely arrived at homes that have been disapproved, or where parents disagree with the fairness of the decision to place their child in TYC, or where court-ordered child support is in arrears. Thus we were heartened in 2006 when a slightly higher percentage of parent respondents endorsed the quality of TYC-provided rehabilitation, education, and parole core services than their counterparts in 2004. Additionally, parent respondents appear more likely to endorse that TYC facilities are safe, and that parents and TYC currently work together well, in 2006 than in 2004. It is therefore somewhat paradoxical that the percentage of parent respondents who report overall satisfaction with TYC dropped from sixty-five percent two years ago to fifty-nine percent in the current year.

Constructive comments from parents point to an area where there is “room for improvement.” In 2006, the most common subject of parental constructive comment was a desire for timely and accurate information about their child. For example, one mother wrote: *“My son was there 2 1/2 weeks before she [the case worker] finally responded to my email. All I wanted to know was how he was doing, visiting hours, directions, rules and things like that.”* Indeed, in 2006 about one in five parent-respondents (22 percent) disagree with the statement, *“I feel well informed about what is happening with my child in TYC.”* Fifteen percent disagree that they *“have been able to contact TYC with ... questions.”* Fourteen percent disagree that *“TYC staff were able to answer their questions.”* Twenty-one percent disagree that *“TYC staff responded promptly to my questions”* -- all of which suggest that communication issues remains a noteworthy source of dissatisfaction among a minority of TYC parents.

TYC is committed to a process of continuous improvement and we thank all who participated in these surveys.

End Notes

¹ Agency Strategic Plan Instructions, pg. 49

² Number of surveys mailed to respondents divided by the number of completed surveys returned.

³ Comments, no matter how generally positive, were considered “constructive” if they contained any suggestion for improvement.

⁴ Texas Performance Review CG 2: Set Customer Service Standards for Texas State Government. <http://www.window.state.tx.us/tpr/tpr5/3cg/cg02.html>. Page 1.

Appendix A

Compact With Texans

TEXAS YOUTH COMMISSION 2002 REPORT ON CUSTOMER SERVICE

COMPACT WITH TEXANS

The Texas Youth Commission (TYC) is Texas' juvenile corrections agency. We protect the public, provide rehabilitation services for youth committed to us by courts, habilitate youth to become productive and responsible citizens through education and productive work, and furnish information about juvenile delinquency prevention.

Texans have a right to expect from TYC:

- Balanced decision making that considers public safety first.
- Clean, safe, secure and well-ordered facilities operated under best juvenile correctional practices.
- High quality rehabilitation and education programs that promote development of law-abiding and productive lives.
- Ethical and well-trained staff.
- Prompt and thorough responses to e-mail, written and telephone inquiries.

We value and respect cultural diversity.

We will seek to do business with vendors for goods and services in an honest and straightforward manner, ensuring that all potential business partners have an equal competitive opportunity to gain contracts from this agency in accordance with state procurement law.

We are committed to providing victims of juvenile crime their rights under the law, ensuring that they are informed, involved, and treated with dignity, fairness and respect.

For more information about the Texas Youth Commission, please visit our web site: www.tyc.state.tx.us E-mail us at tyc@tyc.state.tx.us or call or write to the Texas Youth Commission, 4900 North Lamar Boulevard, P. O. Box 4260, Austin, Texas 78765, (512) 424-6130.

Formal written complaint processes are established for the public and for those youth confined to TYC facilities. The public complaint process is contained in the TYC General Administrative Policy Manual section GAP.81.11. This policy may be accessed through the Youth Commission's internet web site. The youth complaint process is contained in the TYC General Administrative Policy Manual section GAP.93.31. This policy may be accessed through the Youth Commission's internet web site. Youth complaints may be filed at each TYC facility or a contract facility.

The Youth Commission has established 15 working days as our complaint response deadline. Questions concerning the complaint process should be directed to:

**Complaint Coordinator
Texas Youth Commission
P. O. Box 4260
Austin, Texas 78765
Phone (512) 424-6235
Fax (512) 424-6166**

The Texas Youth Commission pledges to all Texans to do the very best job possible for the people of the State. We are honored to be serving the public of Texas.

Susan Dow, Executive Assistant/Planner, is the Texas Youth Commission customer service representative. E-mail Ms. Dow at susan.dow@tyc.state.tx.us or call or write to Ms. Dow at P. O. Box 4260, Austin, Texas 78765, (512) 424-6016.

Appendix B.

Customer Service Performance Measures

STANDARD OUTCOME MEASURES	2000	2002	2004	2006
Percentage of Juvenile Justice Professionals Expressing Overall Satisfaction with TYC	80%	89%	86%	82%
Percentage Parents of TYC-committed Youth Expressing Overall Satisfaction with TYC	67%	66%	65%	59%
Percentage of Juvenile Justice Professionals Identifying Ways to Improve Service Delivery	11%	14%	15%	14%
Percentage of Parents of TYC-committed Youth Identifying Ways to Improve Service Delivery	31%	24%	33%	30%
STANDARD EFFICIENCY MEASURES				
Cost Per Juvenile Justice Professional Surveyed	\$1.08	\$1.46	\$1.62	\$1.93
Cost Per TYC Parent Surveyed	\$5.71	\$4.51	\$6.51	\$7.28
STANDARD EXPLANATORY MEASURES				
Number of Customer Groups Inventoried	5	3	3	3
Number Customers Identified	12,371	11,938	11,567	12,917
TYC-SPECIFIC MEASURES				
Percentage Juvenile Justice Professionals Expressing Satisfaction With Promptness of TYC Response to Questions	72%	84%	80%	77%
Percentage TYC Parents Expressing Satisfaction With Promptness of TYC Response to Questions	66%	61%	55%	69%

Appendix C.

Customer Service Performance Measure
Definitions

Customer Service Performance Measures Definitions

STANDARD MEASURE

Outcome Measure

Title: Percentage of Juvenile Justice Professionals Expressing Overall Satisfaction with TYC

Short Definition: Percentage of Juvenile Justice Professionals responding to question, "Overall, I am satisfied with TYC," who "agree" or "strongly agree" with this assessment.

Purpose/Importance: This measure fulfills a standard customer service performance-reporting requirement. It is an estimate of the proportion of Texas Juvenile Justice Professionals that express overall satisfaction with the agency.

Source/Collection of Data: Opinions are obtained through a customer service quality survey administered biennially through the mail by TYC. Survey forms are sent to all Juvenile Court Judges and all Chief Juvenile Probation Officers in Texas. Returned surveys are edit checked and entered into a database.

Method of Calculation: Respondents select answers from six check box elements: "Strongly Agree", "Agree", "Neutral", "Disagree", "Strongly Disagree", and "Don't Know." Those who "Strongly Agree" or "Agree" are counted as endorsing the question. Percentage is calculated on the basis of respondents expressing an opinion other than "Don't Know."

Data Limitations: Response rates may affect the inferences that should be drawn from survey data.

Calculation Type: Non-cumulative.

New Measure: Yes.

Desired Performance: Higher than Target.

STANDARD MEASURE

Outcome Measure

Title: Percentage of Parents of TYC-committed Youth Expressing Overall Satisfaction with TYC

Short Definition: *Percentage of parents of TYC-committed youth responding to question, "Overall, I am satisfied with TYC," who "agree" or "strongly agree" with this assessment.*

Purpose/Importance: *This measure fulfills a standard customer service performance-reporting requirement. It is an estimate of the proportion of parents and guardians of TYC youth that express overall satisfaction with the agency.*

Source/Collection of Data: *Opinions are obtained through a customer service quality survey administered biennially through the mail by TYC. Survey forms are sent to 2,000 randomly selected parents of youth currently in TYC custody, or who have been released from custody within the past year. Returned surveys are edit-checked and entered into a database.*

Method of Calculation: *Respondents select answers from six check box elements: "Strongly Agree", "Agree", "Neutral", "Disagree", "Strongly Disagree", and "Don't Know." Those who "Strongly Agree" or "Agree" are counted as endorsing the question. Percentage is calculated on the basis of respondents expressing an opinion other than "Don't Know."*

Data Limitations: *Response rates may affect the inferences that should be drawn from survey data.*

Calculation Type: *Non-cumulative.*

New Measure: *Yes.*

Desired Performance: *Higher than Target.*

STANDARD MEASURE

Outcome Measure

Title: Percentage of Juvenile Justice Professionals Identifying Ways to Improve Service Delivery

Short Definition: *Percentage of Juvenile Justice Professionals providing a written suggestion for improvement.*

Purpose/Importance: *This measure fulfills a standard customer service performance-reporting requirement.*

Source/Collection of Data: *Opinions are obtained through a customer service quality survey administered biennially through the mail by TYC. Survey forms are sent to all Juvenile Court Judges and all Chief Juvenile Probation Officers in Texas. Returned surveys are edit checked and entered into a database.*

Method of Calculation: *The number of Juvenile Justice Professionals providing a written suggestion for improvement is counted. Percentage is calculated on the basis of the number of juvenile justice professionals who respond to the survey.*

Data Limitations: *Response rates may affect the inferences that should be drawn from survey data.*

Calculation Type: *Non-cumulative.*

New Measure: *Yes.*

Desired Performance: *Lower than Target.*

STANDARD MEASURE

Outcome Measure

Title: Percentage of Parents of TYC-committed Youth Identifying Ways to Improve Service Delivery

Short Definition: *Percentage of parents of TYC-committed youth responding to question, "Overall, I am satisfied with TYC," who "agree" or "strongly agree" with this assessment.*

Purpose/Importance: *Percentage of parents of TYC-committed youth providing a written suggestion for improvement.*

Source/Collection of Data: *Opinions are obtained through a customer service quality survey administered biennially through the mail by TYC. Survey forms are sent to 2,000 randomly selected parents of youth currently in TYC custody, or who have been released from custody within the past year. Returned surveys are edit checked and entered into a database.*

Method of Calculation: *The number of parents of TYC youth providing a written suggestion for improvement is counted. Percentage is calculated on the basis of the number of parents who respond to the survey.*

Data Limitations: *Response rates may affect the inferences that should be drawn from survey data.*

Calculation Type: *Non-cumulative.*

New Measure: *Yes.*

Desired Performance: *Lower than Target.*

STANDARD MEASURE

Efficiency Measure

Title: Cost Per Juvenile Justice Professional Surveyed

Short Definition: The cost of mailing survey packets to all Juvenile Court Judges and Chief Juvenile Probation Officers in Texas including the cost of stationery, printing and postage divided by the number of questionnaires returned by judges and probation chiefs.

Purpose/Importance: This measure fulfills a standard customer service performance-reporting requirement.

Source/Collection of Data: Survey forms are sent to all Juvenile Court Judges and Chief Juvenile Probation Officers in Texas. The number survey forms returned is counted and recorded.

Method of Calculation: The cost of sending a single survey packet is estimated by considering the cost of stationery, printing and required postage. The per-packed cost is multiplied by number of packets sent and the result is divided number of returned completed questionnaires.

Data Limitations: Survey response rate will affect this measure.

Calculation Type: Non-cumulative.

New Measure: Yes.

Desired Performance: Lower than Target.

STANDARD MEASURE

Efficiency Measure

Title: Cost Per TYC Parent Surveyed

Short Definition: *The cost of sending 1,000 packets to randomly selected TYC parents including costs of stationery, postage, return postage and Spanish language translation divided by the number questionnaires returned by parents.*

Purpose/Importance: *This measure fulfills a standard customer service performance-reporting requirement.*

Source/Collection of Data: *Survey forms are sent to 2,000 randomly selected parents and guardians of TYC youth. Number survey forms returned is counted and recorded.*

Method of Calculation: *The cost of sending a single survey packet is estimated by considering the cost of stationery, printing and required postage. The per-packed cost is multiplied by number of packets sent, the cost of Spanish translation is added, and the result is divided number of returned completed questionnaires.*

Data Limitations: *Survey response rate will affect this measure.*

Calculation Type: *Non-cumulative.*

New Measure: *Yes.*

Desired Performance: *Lower than Target.*

STANDARD MEASURE

Explanatory Measure

Title: Number of Customer Groups Inventoried

Short Definition: *The number of unique primary customer groups identified in the Customer Service Inventory.*

Purpose/Importance: *This measure fulfills a standard customer service performance-reporting requirement.*

Source/Collection of Data: *A customer service inventory is presented in Appendix E, Table 1 of the Strategic Plan.*

Method of Calculation: *The number of groups identified in the customer service inventory is counted.*

Data Limitations: *None identified.*

Calculation Type: *Cumulative.*

New Measure: *Yes.*

Desired Performance: *Not applicable to explanatory measures.*

STANDARD MEASURE

Explanatory Measure

Title: Number Customers Identified

Short Definition: *The total number of customers in the customer groups inventoried.*

Purpose/Importance: *This measure fulfills a standard customer service performance-reporting requirement.*

Source/Collection of Data: *A customer service inventory is presented in Appendix E. of the Strategic Plan. Data on number Juvenile Court Judges and Chief Juvenile Probation Officers are received from the Texas Juvenile Probation Commission. Data on numbers of parents are obtained from the TYC Correctional Care data systems.*

Method of Calculation: *The number of Juvenile Justice Professionals and the number of parents guardians of TYC youth are counted. Results are added.*

Data Limitations: *None identified.*

Calculation Type: *Cumulative.*

New Measure: *Yes.*

Desired Performance: *Not applicable to explanatory measures.*

TYC-SPECIFIC MEASURE

Outcome Measure

Title: Percentage Juvenile Justice Professionals Expressing Satisfaction With Promptness of TYC Response to Questions

Short Definition: *Percentage of Juvenile Justice Professionals responding to question, "TYC staff responded promptly to my questions", who "agree" or "strongly agree" with this assessment.*

Purpose/Importance: *Timely response to questions is a hallmark of effective customer relations. This measure is an estimate of the proportion of Texas Juvenile Justice professionals that express overall satisfaction with the timely response of the agency to questions.*

Source/Collection of Data: *Opinions are obtained through a customer service quality survey administered biennially through the mail by TYC. Survey forms are sent to all Juvenile Court Judges and all Chief Juvenile Probation Officers in Texas. Returned surveys are edit checked and entered into a database.*

Method of Calculation: *Respondents select answers from six check box elements: "Strongly Agree", "Agree", "Neutral", "Disagree", "Strongly Disagree", and "Don't Know." Those who "Strongly Agree" or "Agree" are counted as endorsing the question. Percentage is calculated on the basis of respondents expressing an opinion other than "Don't Know."*

Data Limitations: *Response rates may affect the inferences that should be drawn from survey data.*

Calculation Type: *Non-cumulative.*

New Measure: *Yes.*

Desired Performance: *Higher than Target.*

TYC-SPECIFIC MEASURE

Outcome Measure

Title: Percentage Juvenile Justice Professionals Expressing Satisfaction With Promptness of TYC Response to Questions

Short Definition: *Percentage of parents of TYC-committed youth responding to question, "TYC staff responded promptly to my questions", who "agree" or "strongly agree" with this assessment.*

Purpose/Importance: *Timely response to questions is a hallmark of effective customer relations. This measure is an estimate of the proportion of parents that express satisfaction with the timely response of the agency to questions.*

Source/Collection of Data: *Opinions are obtained through a customer service quality survey administered biennially through the mail by TYC. Survey forms are sent to 2,000 randomly selected parents of youth currently in TYC custody, or who have been released from custody within the past year. Returned surveys are edit checked and entered into a database.*

Method of Calculation: *Respondents select answers from six check box elements: "Strongly Agree", "Agree", "Neutral", "Disagree", "Strongly Disagree", and "Don't Know." Those who "Strongly Agree" or "Agree" are counted as endorsing the question. Percentage is calculated on the basis of respondents expressing an opinion other than "Don't Know."*

Data Limitations: *Response rates may affect the inferences that should be drawn from survey data.*

Calculation Type: *Non-cumulative.*

New Measure: *Yes.*

Desired Performance: *Higher than Target.*

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