


Office of the Child's Representative (OCR)
SB 12-099 Fact Sheet

Linda Weinerman, Executive Director 303.860.1517 X 105

Dorothy M. Macias, Staff Attorney and Legislative Liaison 303.860.1517 X 106

Statement of OCR's concerns regarding the placement of children who have been abused and neglected needing foster care in the Division of Youth Corrections Facility known as Ridge View Youth Service Center (Ridge View) through SB 12-099

History: In 1997, the General Assembly authorized the Division of Youth Corrections to contract with a single entity for the design, construction, and operation of a 500-bed program to house juvenile male offenders that require removal from the community. Currently, Ridge View is at 50% capacity.

Context: Ridge View youth correctional facility secures delinquent youth that have been adjudicated ("convicted") for serious crimes or multiple times. The juveniles' criminal risk and protective factors are assessed at the time of entry based on factors highly related to criminal behavior. Based on this assessment, juveniles placed in this facility "are at a significantly greater risk to re-offend than youth committed to other NYC facilities." (Ridge View Academy Administrative Audit FY 08-09, page 6) Dr. Jeffrey Butts notes:

The management and staff at Ridge View work with very challenging young people. This is not a campus for school truants and shoplifters. The young people sent to Ridge View have been charged with serious offenses. Turning them around and helping them to grow from troublesome adolescents into forward-looking, achievement-oriented young adults is not an easy task. (Ridge View Program Summary, 2010, page 1)

Ridge View is operated by Rite of Passage, a for-profit company headquartered in Nevada. The school, Ridge View Academy, located on Ridge View grounds is designed to address committed youth's "anti-social behaviors." (Ridge View Academy Administrative Audit FY 08-09, page 4)

Rite of Passage Intervention with Delinquent Juveniles Committed to the Colorado Division of Youth

Corrections: Juveniles are "assimilated" immediately with a uniform fitting and a haircut. As a correctional facility, Ridge View's emphasis is on behavior modification, structure, and public safety; rather than helping abused and neglected children address the trauma that they have experienced. A behavior management system employed at Ridge View includes instruction on progressive student-to-student 'proactive interventions,' a student status system, and "force field analysis" which allows staff to grade youths' involvement in the school program. Committed youth report that gang issues are present at Ridge View.

To date, Ridge View has not provided data regarding how its programming applies to abused and neglected youth. Ridge View has provided an Administrative Audit for Fiscal Year 2008-2009 showing its effectiveness with recidivism rates concerning delinquent youth. Recidivism data does not apply to abused and neglected youth that have been placed in foster care.