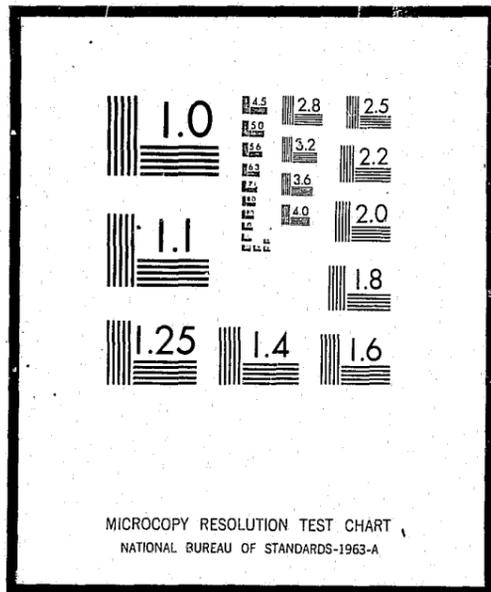


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### FIELD REVIEW AND PROJECT EVALUATION REPORT

Project: Providence Education Center Grant Award: \$315,993  
 Project Number: S-MP43-72-c3 Subgrant Period: 3/15/73 to 3/14/74  
 Subgrantee: St. Louis City Juvenile Court Project Director: Joseph Ryan  
 Date of Report: April 10, 1974 Authorized Official: Donald R. Jones  
 Prepared by: Kathryn Ratcliff, Evaluation Analyst  
 Bill Taylor, Program Analyst  
 Reese Joiner, Auditor

### SCOPE OF REPORT

This report consists of (1) fiscal information relative to the project's contract compliance with LEAA requirements and (2) a preliminary evaluation of the project including a descriptive report on youths who attended Providence and an evaluative assessment of the extent to which particular goals of the Providence Education Center were achieved.

The fiscal information was gathered in October, 1973. The evaluation data cover the period from September, 1972 through December, 1973. A programmatic assessment of contract compliance issues completed by a Region 5 program analyst early in 1974 found no deficiencies in that area.

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8/19/81

## FISCAL FINDINGS AND ANALYSIS

1. The system of accounting for staff employees' daily work hours can be improved by incorporating revisions to the form presently used. These revisions, not of a major nature, have been thoroughly discussed with the Business Manager, Mrs. Isom, and she concurs in their implementation.

2. Travel reports should include both starting and destination address or should indicate "round trip" when applicable.

3. Purchase orders should be properly approved prior to submission to vendors.

4. Vendors invoices should be verified and properly approved prior to payment.

Appropriate corrective action was taken on the above items in November, 1973.

## FISCAL APPRAISAL

The accounting system and internal controls are considered most effective. The assets of the subgrantee are safeguarded and the entire fiscal approach is conducted in accordance with recognized management principles and policies.

## PROVIDENCE EDUCATION CENTER:

### SUMMARY OF EVALUATION FINDINGS

An analysis of 118 youths who have attended Providence Educational Center has been made. Results of the study include information regarding the types of youths served by the program, and several indications of changes in their behavior subsequent to enrollment at Providence. In brief, the youths are from large, lower socio-economic class families. The majority of them are in the 5th through 7th grades, are several years behind in school, and have multiple prior Juvenile Court referrals of a serious and recent nature.

During their enrollment at Providence, most of the youths were less involved in crime than in the year prior to joining Providence. Specifically, 76 percent had either no referrals while at Providence or a decreased referral rate compared to the year prior to entering the program. Moreover, half of these referrals were during the first two months of enrollment in the program. In addition to their decreased criminal behavior, the youths studied also appear to have advanced educationally while at Providence. The primary educational goal of the Providence program, that of improving the youths' skills to a level sufficient to enter high school, was reached in many cases. Within a predetermined amount of time, these students either achieved a test score warranting placement or were actually placed in high school.

The program has been able to keep most students enrolled for periods amounting to an entire school year. The youths studied attended Providence for an average of 249 days. Those who left the program did so largely (i.e., in 55 percent of the cases) because they had graduated and/or were ready for another school placement. Furthermore, nearly half of the youths showed excellent attendance (being absent only 0-9 percent of the time). This is particularly significant since prior to enrolling in Providence one-third of the participants were not even enrolled in school, and many of those that were in school had truancy problems.

The Providence staff has been doing a good job in maintaining on-going lines of communication with the families of youths as well as with the Juvenile Court and other concerned institutions. In over half the cases (66 percent) the families were contacted on nearly a monthly basis.

Subsequent to leaving Providence, the youths studied had fewer referrals than they had in an equal period prior to joining Providence. Of the 17 with referrals in the six months after leaving Providence, only three had serious (Impact) referrals which were not dismissed. In the six months prior to entering Providence, 34 of these youths had had referrals, with 16 of these being serious (Impact) referrals.

Of the Providence youths handled by the Aftercare staff, most (82 percent) were placed in a regular school setting. Many encountered difficulties in adjusting to their placement but only one was suspended from school.

In summary, the Providence program, judged on the criteria and evidence presented here, appears to be successful and no serious deficiencies were uncovered. One must, however, accept this conclusion within the scope of limitations noted in this report.

PROVIDENCE EDUCATION CENTER  
AN EVALUATION

I. INTRODUCTION

This report provides an initial evaluation of Providence Education Center. It focuses upon 118 youths who were enrolled in the Providence program between February 15, 1973 and December 31, 1973. There are several purposes of this report. First, the family and personal background characteristics of the youths, including education experience and referral history, will be examined in order to describe the kinds of juveniles affected by this project. Second, information on the performance of youths while at Providence and some information on the service provided by Providence will be examined. Finally, the experience of youths after leaving Providence, and in particular any evidence of further referrals to juvenile authorities, will be studied in order to provide a better basis for judging the effectiveness of the Providence program. It should be added that this report is not the final analysis of Providence. A second and more detailed evaluation will be completed near the end of the third Impact award period.

II. POPULATION OF YOUTHS STUDIED

The present evaluation is based on data collected over a one year period (February 15, 1973 to February 15, 1974) on all students who were either enrolled at Providence on February 15, 1973 or who enrolled subsequent to that date but before December 31, 1973. The population of students thus defined consists of 118 youths. For those who were in the Providence program on February 15, 1973,

information on their participation in the program was gathered back to September, 1972. Because no data predating September, 1972 were gathered, several months of program information, and in some cases personal background information, is missing for some youths.

Of the 118 youths considered in this evaluation, 68 had terminated from Providence by February 15, 1974. Among these there were 56 who had been out of Providence at least six months. In interpreting the following analysis it is important, as will be pointed out, to remember that the study deals with youths no longer in the program as well as ones still enrolled.

III. OVERVIEW OF THE PROVIDENCE PROGRAM

Providence is an educational center for adjudicated males from the St. Louis City Juvenile Court. It opened in 1971 when several Christian Brothers decided to utilize a former high school building closed by the Catholic Church as a learning environment for 15 youths. Since that time the Providence program has expanded and changed considerably. Enrollment has grown to approximately 100 and the staff has increased both in number and in its degree of specialization.

Providence is best described as an educationally oriented resocialization center. Students are enrolled in a full-time ungraded school program. Instruction is individualized within a classroom setting where teacher-student contact is intense. The student-teacher ratio is about 6 to 1, and student teachers often decrease this ratio. Given the close contact, academic or behavioral problems that develop within the classroom can be handled effectively by a member of the teaching staff without disturbing the work of other students. Teaching specialists in reading provide additional intensive remedial aid to students. The academically oriented aspects of the curriculum are supplemented with arts and crafts opportunities, a woodshop, a gym,

various achievement contests (art and poetry), the publication of a student newspaper, intermural athletic competition, involvement in career day activities, talent shows, visiting speakers and cultural enrichment programs.

The educational component of Providence is supported by the social service component which consists of social workers and counselors. In coordination with the efforts of the teaching staff, the social service staff develops treatment goals for each youth and helps the youth work toward these goals using weekly individual counseling sessions, crisis intervention techniques, group counseling, and parental counseling. Frequent meetings are held with teachers to discuss treatment goals, problems, and progress. In addition, meetings are held with responsible others such as the juvenile probation officer, group home staff, or Missouri Hills Aftercare worker. The social service staff is importantly concerned with improving the youth's self-concept, with the development of self control, and with improving communication skills.

#### IV. PROFILE OF PROVIDENCE ENROLLEES

Information was collected on students enrolled at Providence in order to provide a basic profile of the characteristics of the population served by the program. Most of the information was extracted by the Providence staff from Juvenile Court social histories. In some cases the information was based on the personal knowledge of the youth and his family of either the Court Probation Officer (D. J. O.) or Providence staff member. Because of some omissions in the reports of these sources, full information was not available for all youths.

##### A. Referrals to Providence

The Providence program is currently directed at youths who have come before the Juvenile Court with an indication of serious delinquent behavior. According

to present guidelines, a youth referred to Providence must be an adjudicated juvenile who at the time of his referral is either an open case at the Juvenile Court or is being carried in an open status at a Juvenile Institution such as Missouri Hills. Prior to the LEAA Impact funding, juveniles did not have to be known to the Court to be accepted at Providence. Some of these early entrants to the program were still enrolled at the start of the period being studied and they are included among the youths considered here. They are represented in the following referral table and in subsequent tables as being apparently unknown to the court (e. g., no prior referral history).

Table 1 indicates the agencies which referred each of the 118 youths to Providence. Most of the youths were referred to Providence by the Juvenile Court. Such referrals made up 70.3 percent (83) of the youths. At the time of their application to Providence, most of these youths were open cases at the Court -- they were being processed by Intake, were awaiting a court hearing, or were under either official or unofficial court supervision following a referral. The

TABLE 1  
REFERRAL AGENCY

<u>Agency</u>	<u>N*</u>	<u>%</u>
Juvenile Court	83	70.3
Missouri Hills	24	20.3
Group Home	3	2.5
Division of Children's Services	1	.8
Unknown	7	5.9
	<u>118</u>	<u>99.8</u>

\*In this table and in subsequent ones, N refers to the number of youths in a particular category and % refers to the percent of youths represented.

next largest group of referrals, 20.3 percent (24), were made from Missouri Hills Home for Boys. The Missouri Hills referrals included sixteen who were then residents at the institution and eight who were participating in the aftercare program. Only 3.3 percent (4) of the youths were referred by other agencies (Group Homes or the Division of Children's Services) and 5.9 percent (7) had no known Juvenile Court status.

#### B. Family Characteristics

An attempt was made to determine the economic situation of the families of the youths at Providence. In general it was found that many came from families that could be considered to be economically marginal. Information on family incomes was available for 65 of the 118 youths. Comparisons are somewhat difficult since the information, obtained from Juvenile Court sources, often refers to different years for different families. Nevertheless, based on the information available, we find that while the amount of income of these families ranged from \$1260 to \$14,400 per year, the average amount was just \$5384.

Perhaps a more meaningful indication of the economic status of these families is provided by information on the employment characteristics of parents and guardians. These findings, obtained largely from the same sources, are reported in Table 2. We can see that in 34.7 percent (41) of the families neither parent is employed. Conversely, if we combine the three categories indicating that

TABLE 2

#### EMPLOYMENT STATUS OF PARENT OR GUARDIAN

Parental Employment	N	%
Both mother and father employed	17	14.4
Only mother employed	18	15.3
Only father employed	10	8.5
Neither employed	41	34.7
Unknown	32	27.1
	118	100.0

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either one or both parents are employed, we find that only 38.2 percent (45) of the families have a parent who is known to be working.

Two other indicators of the family situations of the Providence youths were also considered; their place of residence at the time of their referral to Providence and the size of their families. The information on place of residence is shown on Table 3. We see that only a minority were living with two parents (21.9 percent, or 26 if we consider both natural and stepparents). The largest single group were the 44.1 percent (52) living only with their mothers. In about a fourth of the cases the youth was living at either the Detention Center or at Missouri Hills.

TABLE 3

RESIDENCE AT THE TIME OF APPLICATION TO PROVIDENCE

Residence	N	%
Detention Center	10	8.5
Missouri Hills	16	13.6
With other relative(s) or legal guardian(s)	2	1.7
With father and stepmother	1	.8
With mother and stepfather	3	2.5
With father only	0	0
With mother only	52	44.1
With both natural parents	22	18.6
Other	8	6.8
Unknown	4	3.4
	<u>118</u>	<u>100.0</u>

The information on family size is presented in Table 4. Clearly many of these youths come from large families. About two thirds (67.8 percent) of the families included five or more children and nearly one fourth (24.6 percent) have ten or more children.

TABLE 4

Total Number of Children in Family	SIZE OF FAMILY		
	N	%	Cumulative %
1 or Unknown	16	13.6	100.0
2	4	3.4	86.4
3	12	10.2	83.0
4	5	4.2	72.8
5	7	5.9	68.6
6	12	10.2	62.7
7	15	12.7	52.5
8	11	9.3	39.8
9	6	5.1	30.5
10 or more	<u>30</u>	<u>25.4</u>	
	<u>118</u>	<u>100.0</u>	

C. Prior Schooling

One primary purpose of the Providence program is to provide an effective educational experience for the youths referred to it. Education is considered the "primary vehicle" by which resocialization occurs. In pursuing this aim the program must deal with students with a diverse range of preparation and deficiencies. As we see in Table 5, a majority of the youths (57.6 percent) were in the 5th through 7th grades at the time they entered Providence. Another large group (18.6 percent) had been in special education programs.

TABLE 5

GRADE ENROLLED IN OR LAST GRADE COMPLETED

Grade	AT TIME OF ADMISSION	
	N	%
1	0	0
2	1	.8
3	4	3.4
4	5	4.2
5	13	11.0
6	29	24.6
7	26	22.0
8	4	3.4
Special	22	18.6
Unknown	<u>14</u>	<u>11.9</u>
	<u>118</u>	<u>99.9</u>

More significant is the information on the educational deficiencies of these youths which is presented in Table 6. The data in this table show the number of years, if any, these youths were behind their "expected grade levels", as defined by their ages and the time they began school. These data show that these youths had not fared well in the schools they previously attended. Virtually none (only 1.7 percent, or two youths) were at their correct grade level. In contrast, 55.1 percent were known to be from one to four years behind in school. It can be assumed that the other youths from special education programs had also encountered significant difficulties in school.

TABLE 6

NUMBER OF YEARS BEHIND EXPECTED GRADE LEVEL

Number of Years	N	%
At grade level	2	1.7
One year behind	16	13.6
Two years behind	28	23.7
Three years behind	16	13.6
Four years behind	5	4.2
Unknown	27	22.9
Special Education	24	20.3
	<u>118</u>	<u>100.0</u>

D. Juvenile Court Referral Histories of Youths

The youths in the Providence program were found to vary widely in both the number and the kind of previous referrals to the Juvenile Court. At present the records of 106 of the 118 youths have been examined. \* The youths range from

\*FOOTNOTE: The twelve missing youths are youths presumably known to the court but for whom at present no card or file can be located in the Juvenile Court record room. There are an additional 25 youths for whom files alone cannot be located (they are either in transit between court officials or are not properly signed out). These two deficiencies affect the analysis in two ways. First, it is limited to the 106 youths and second, detailed information is lacking on a significant number of prior referrals, thus precluding a distinction between dismissed and nondismissed referrals.

"Referrals" as it is used here refers to instances in which the juvenile is brought to the attention of the Juvenile Court exclusive of those instances involving a traffic referral or requests such as a request for permission to give medical treatment.

those few with no known referrals to one youth with 22 prior referrals. The average number of Court referrals for these youths is 4.0. Information on the distribution of previous referrals is shown in Table 7. Clearly the majority have been referred to the Court on more than one occasion. Nearly half (49.1 percent) have four or more prior referrals.

TABLE 7

EXTENT OF PRIOR REFERRALS TO JUVENILE COURT

Number of Prior Referrals	N	%	Cumulative %
10 or more	8	7.5	
9	2	1.9	9.4
8	0	0	9.4
7	3	2.8	12.3
6	8	7.5	19.8
5	10	9.4	29.2
4	21	19.8	49.1
3	16	15.1	64.2
2	20	18.9	83.0
1	11	10.4	93.4
0	7	6.6	100.0
	<u>106</u>	<u>100.0</u>	

Many of these referrals involved charges that were relatively serious. About two-thirds (67.0 percent) of the youths had been referred to the Court for an Impact offense, defined as either a person to person crime or burglary. Over a third (37.7 percent) of the youths have multiple Impact referrals. The average number is 1.4. The full information on Impact referrals is shown in Table 8.

A considerable number of these prior referrals occurred shortly before the youths were enrolled in Providence. Forty-four of the youths (41.5 percent) had been referred to the court during the three months prior to the date they entered Providence and twenty-one (19.8 percent) of these had been for Impact offenses.

TABLE 8

## EXTENT OF PREVIOUS IMPACT\* REFERRALS TO THE JUVENILE COURT

Number of Previous Impact Referrals	N	%	Cumulative %
8	1	.9	
7	0	0	
6	2	1.9	2.8
5	4	3.8	6.6
4	3	2.8	9.4
3	9	8.5	17.9
2	21	19.8	37.7
1	31	29.2	67.0
0	35	33.0	100.0
	<u>106</u>	<u>99.9</u>	

\* Impact referrals are person to person crimes and burglary

As a final note it might be added that many of these youths come from families including other children who had had referrals to the Juvenile Court. Records of the court were examined by Providence staff to determine whether any siblings of these youths had been referred to the court. These data, presented as the number of such siblings in each youth's family are shown in Table 9. In almost one half of the cases (44.9 percent) one or more siblings were known to the court. These figures are, however, likely underestimates since it was not possible in many cases to determine if siblings had been referred.

TABLE 9

## NUMBER OF BROTHERS AND SISTERS WITH REFERRALS

Number of Siblings with Referrals	N	%
7	1	.8
6	2	1.7
5	4	3.4
4	5	4.2
3	8	6.8
2	14	11.9
1	19	16.1
0 or unknown	65	55.1
	<u>118</u>	<u>100.0</u>

## V. THE PERFORMANCE OF YOUTHS AT PROVIDENCE: COURT REFERRALS

One of the objectives of Providence is to reduce the participation of enrolled students in street crime. In order to assess the achievement of this objective, we have examined the court referral rates for Providence students during several different periods. As noted before, we do not currently have enough information to distinguish between prior court referrals in which charges were dismissed and those which were not dismissed.\*

\*FOOTNOTE: It should be noted that the referral analysis contained in this report is focused on comparisons between behavior occurring before and that occurring during (or after) participation in the Providence program. Obviously there are many other factors in a youth's life occurring simultaneously with enrollment at Providence, including the simple fact that he is growing older. It is possible that these other factors have been an important influence on any changes in behavior patterns that do occur. Stronger evidence that Providence is the primary change agent would require a research design employing a control or comparison group. Alternative strategies were considered but they were judged impractical if not impossible for this evaluation period. One alternative, a design employing randomly chosen and assigned control and experimental groups, raises ethical questions of denying service to youths. Moreover, since the Juvenile Court has referred fewer youths than Providence was budgeted to handle, such a design would significantly decrease the number of youths Providence actually handled. Any such reduction would be at odds with the general plan of the Impact program, namely to have programs of sufficient scope to have a dramatic and quick effect on the crime rate on the city's streets. The major alternative to the experimental control group design involves identifying individuals matched on such important characteristics as age, residence, Juvenile Court history, and sex, to the group enrolled at Providence. The use of such a group to compare rates of referral remains a possible future alternative. However, formidable obstacles greatly limit the potential for locating such a group. For one thing, it is considered necessary to form the group from the population active at the court before Providence began accepting a significant number of youths. Since the court is assumed to be making a concerted effort to refer appropriate youths to Providence at the present time, youths not referred have in a sense been considered and rejected. An examination of Juvenile Court cases would be required to determine the extent to which Providence youths are a definable subset of juveniles handled by the court. Changes in the Juvenile Court and the multifaceted changes in St. Louis area as a whole would have to be carefully examined to determine the appropriateness of a comparison group from an earlier period. Furthermore, since the number of youths handled by the Juvenile Court is considerable, the computerization of Juvenile Court records would be a prerequisite for forming a reasonably representative comparison group. Computerization is currently underway. By mid 1974 the extent of the computerized information will be known and a determination will then be made as to whether it is feasible to develop a group comparable in meaningful ways to Providence youths under study.

Table 10 compares each youth's prior referral rate (based on the year before entering Providence) and his referral rate at Providence. The rate at Providence is standardized according to the number of days he was enrolled at Providence. Since many of these youths (50) are still at Providence, this comparison will probably change as time passes. Several notable summary statistics can be derived from this table. First, there are 41 youths who have had referrals while at Providence. Twenty youths (18.9 percent) had a referral rate while at Providence which was higher than their referral rate the year before joining Providence. In contrast, 81 youths (76.4 percent) either had no referrals at Providence or had a referral rate which was less than their referral rate the year before joining Providence. Among those youths who have terminated from Providence, the findings are roughly similar. Of these 68 youths, 22.9 percent had higher referral rates and 70.5 percent had no referrals or at least lower rates.

The referrals recorded for the 41 youths while at Providence included five dismissed referrals, six status offenses, 10 nondismissed referrals for Impact crimes and 20 other nondismissed referrals for less serious offenses, which would still have involved criminal charges had the youth been an adult.

An analysis of prior referrals and referrals at Providence was also completed considering Impact referrals alone. The results of this analysis are presented in Table 11. Ninety-five youths (89.6 percent) had no Impact referrals while at Providence. Seven youths (6.6 percent) have had Impact referrals at a higher rate while at Providence than during the year before Providence. In contrast, 97 (91.5 percent) have a lower Impact referral rate.

Of the 41 youths with referrals at Providence, 26.8 percent (11) were referred to the Juvenile Court within 30 days of entering Providence and 14.6 percent were referred during their second month at Providence. Thus, nearly half of the referrals

TABLE 10

REFERRAL RATE AT PROVIDENCE COMPARED TO REFERRAL RATE THE YEAR BEFORE ENTERING PROVIDENCE

Number of Youths	Monthly Referral Rate at Providence									Total
	0 (0)	.01-.07	.08-.16 (1)	.17-.24 (2)	.25-.32 (3)	.33-.41 (4)	.42-.49 (5)	.50-.57 (6)	.58-more (7 or more)	
.58-.66 (7)										0
.50-.57 (6)				1					1	2
.42-.49 (5)	1	1	0	0	1					3
.33-.41 (4)	3	1	2							6
.25-.32 (3)	13	0	1	2	1	0	1	0	1	19
.17-.24 (2)	19	2	3	2	1					27
.08-.16 (1)	21	2	2	3	0	0	2	0	1	31
.01-.07 (0)										0
0 (0)	8	3	4	2	0	1				18
Total	55	9	12	10	3	1	3	0	3	106

Monthly referral rate the year before entering Providence

Note: Monthly referral rate =  $\frac{\text{number of referrals for time period A}}{\text{number of days in time period A}} \times 30.4$

The corresponding number of referrals per year is indicated in parentheses below the monthly referral rate.

TABLE 11

IMPACT REFERRAL RATE AT PROVIDENCE COMPARED TO IMPACT REFERRAL RATE THE YEAR BEFORE ENTERING PROVIDENCE

Monthly Impact Referral Rate at Providence

Number of Youths	Monthly Impact Referral Rate at Providence							Total
	0 (0)	.01-.07	.08-.16 (1)	.17-.24 (2)	.25-.32 (3)	.33-.41 (4)	.42-.49 (5)	
.75-.82 (9)								0
.67-.74 (8)	1							1
.58-.66 (7)								0
.50-.57 (6)	2							2
.42-.49 (5)	3							3
.33-.41 (4)	3							3
.25-.32 (3)	7							7
.17-.24 (2)	18							18
.08-.16 (1)	30	2	2				1	35
.01-.07								0
0 (0)	31	2	2	2				37
Total	95	4	4	2	0	0	1	106

number of Impact referrals for time period A x30.4

Note: Monthly Impact referral rate = number of days in time period A

The corresponding number of Impact referrals per year is indicated in parentheses below the monthly Impact referral rate.

(41.4 percent) that occurred at Providence occurred before the referred youth had spent much time at Providence. Table 12 gives more detailed information, dividing up Providence youths by those who have terminated from the program and those still in it.

TABLE 12

NUMBER OF MONTHS FROM DATE OF ENTRY TO FIRST REFERRAL GIVEN SEPARATELY FOR YOUTHS TERMINATED FROM PROVIDENCE AND THOSE STILL REMAINING AT PROVIDENCE

Time to First Referral	Youths* Terminated from Providence	Youths** Remaining at Providence	Total	Percent
Less than one month	7	4	11	26.8
One to two months	3	3	6	14.6
Two to three months	4	1	5	12.2
Three months or more	10	9	19	46.3
	25	17	41	99.9

\*Mean length of time to first referral = 93.0 days

\*\*Mean length of time to first referral = 174.6 days

While there are no clear relationships between background characteristics of the youths and the number of court referrals they have had while at Providence, it is notable that those with referrals were less likely to adjust well to the Providence program from the very start of their enrollment. In particular there is a rather striking relationship between court referrals and the frequency of attendance by youths during their first month at Providence. These findings are presented in Table 13. Those youths with relatively good attendance records during their first month (0-9 percent of the time absent) are least likely to have had court referrals.

A little over one fourth (27.9 percent) of such youths had referrals. However, among those with the worst attendance records (30 percent or more of the time absent) almost two thirds (63.6 percent) have had referrals.

TABLE 13\*

PERCENT OF YOUTHS WITH A REFERRAL BY INITIAL ATTENDANCE RATE AT PROVIDENCE

<u>Attendance Rate during First Month</u>	<u>Percent of Youths with a Referral</u>
0-9% of the time absent	27.9
10-19% of the time absent	36.4
20-29% of the time absent	42.9
30% or more of the time absent	63.6

\*This table is based on a total of 104 youths. It omits youths with admission dates before September, 1972, since no attendance information for their first month of enrollment is available. It also omits those with less than a full month at Providence.

VI. PERFORMANCE AT PROVIDENCE: ACADEMIC ACHIEVEMENT

Another of the objectives of Providence is to improve the educational skills of enrollees, with special emphasis in the area of reading. Under this objective an important goal was to bring youths up to a level of performance enabling them to pass an eighth grade equivalency test which makes them eligible for high school. The Providence staff has sought to make this goal explicit by estimations based on age and entering test score information, as to when a student should be prepared to take this examination. Because a goal or expectation is set for each student, it is possible to assess the extent of the success of the program in this area. Unfortunately, it had not always been possible for the staff to set definite goals. In many cases the

youths were several years away from taking such a test at the time they entered and it was unrealistic if not impossible to set such goals at that time.

In 53 cases these assessments were deemed possible. For this evaluation only 40 of these are considered since the other 13 youths are still enrolled at Providence and have not yet reached the point where they are eligible to take the equivalency test.

As of February 15, 1974, 62.5 percent (25) of the 40 youths had taken an eighth grade equivalency test and had passed it. Nine students (22.5 percent) had taken the exam and, at least at the most recent administration of the test, had not passed it. (Some had achieved higher scores on a second administration of the test, but if the test had been given a third time the third set of scores were considered here.) The remaining youths had not been administered the test (5.0 percent or two students) or were not eligible for the test while they were at Providence (10.0 percent or four students). Interestingly, of the nine students who did not pass the test, eight were placed in high school on the recommendation of the Providence staff since their test scores, academic achievement and social maturity appeared to warrant such a placement.

The examination of test scores and assessment of improvement is a cumbersome task. The tests are given at different intervals for different youths, depending on entry and exit dates. Furthermore, during this evaluation period two major changes in test administration occurred. One was the elimination of the Bristol Social Adjustment Guide which the Providence staff found nearly useless as a diagnostic tool and time-expensive for recording and analysis. Second, the Wide Range Achievement Test (WRAT) was used nearly exclusively during the first part of the evaluation period, but a change was subsequently made to the near exclusive use of the Iowa Test of Basic Skills (ITBS). This change was justified in terms of particular advantages in

the administration of the test and because it is widely used by the public schools in St. Louis. As a result of these changes, no information is available on the Bristol Test and information is available on two like tests (two Iowa Basics or two WRATS) for only some of the students. Moreover, of the 68 terminated cases there are cases when the same test was given at two different times but where this period includes only a portion of the youth's stay at Providence. The analysis is thus based on only 31 students who have left the Providence program.

Changes in reading and math test scores were examined for the 31 students.\* The changes between the first and second exam ranged from losses to gains of three years on the math test and two years nine months on the reading test. Table 14a shows that many youths have large gains of one or two years (18 on the math test and 8 on the reading test). There are, however, others who show no improvement or a negative change. Table 14a ignores information on the time span between tests.

\*FOOTNOTE: There are several significant problems in this analysis of test scores. The typical methodological difficulties in examining change are accentuated. First, the analysis relies on the administration of a test to a population of youths less familiar with tests and less motivated to take tests than a normal population. These youths have failed tests frequently in the past, have likely missed school more than the average youth, especially on testing day. The reliability of this test for this population and hence the reliability of a change score is questionable. Several scores used in this analysis were close in time and represented relatively large gains or losses (e.g., a loss of nearly three years in four months time). This type of change is suggestive of a score change not wholly due to a gain or loss in learning.

Second, the analysis is limited to those 31 youths who had WRAT tests administered close to their entry and exit dates rather than to all 68 youths who went through the program. Obviously, there are possible biases introduced because the youths considered are a subset of youths enrolled. Finally, there are serious criticisms in the literature regarding the usefulness of the WRAT, its relationship to school achievement and the appropriateness of the given norms. (See Buros Mental Measurement Yearbook for references.) The decision by Providence to change to the more well known ITBS for which locally based comparison figures are available will lessen these problems.

TABLE 14

TABLE 14A: DISTRIBUTION OF CHANGES IN MATH AND READING TEST SCORES

<u>Grade Change</u>	Math (N)	Reading (N)
Increase of 2.0 or more	6	3
Increase of 1.0 - 1.9	12	5
Increase of 0.1 - 0.9	7	11
No Change	3	4
Decrease	3	8
	<u>31</u>	<u>31</u>

TABLE 14B: DISTRIBUTION OF MONTHLY CHANGES IN MATH AND READING TEST SCORES

<u>Monthly rate of Grade Change</u>	Math (N)	Reading (N)
Increase of 0.20 or more	15	9
Increase of 0.10 - 0.19	5	6
Increase of 0.01 - 0.09	4	4
No Change	3	4
Decrease	3	8
	<u>31</u>	<u>31</u>

TABLE 14C: AVERAGE MONTHLY GRADE GAINS ON MATH AND READING TESTS GIVEN BY TIME LAG BETWEEN TEST ADMINISTRATION

<u>Time Between Two Tests</u>	Math (Average monthly gain)	Reading (Average monthly gain)
Two to three months	0.49	0.19
Four to five months	0.36	0.04
Six to seven months	0.09	0.10
Eight or more	0.08	0.13

Table 14b takes the time span into account by displaying monthly change scores, derived by dividing a youth's change in scores by the number of months between the two tests. A monthly increase of 0.10 or more, if continued for a school year, would be equivalent to a year's gain. Twenty-five youths show such a change in math scores and 19 show it on reading scores. This is impressive since these youths have previously been achieving below a normal rate.

The findings presented in these tables must be viewed with caution. Table 14c examines which youths, distinguished by the time gap between the two tests, were associated with the higher monthly rates. On the math test an inverse relationship exists: the shorter the time in the program, the higher the average monthly rate. This would suggest that there may be some plateauing effect over time and the rate of gain at the beginning is not maintained. (A possible qualification is that the youths with small time lags between tests were in the program a shorter time and may have different learning patterns or rates.) The inverse relationship did not apply to the reading scores.

VII. PERFORMANCE AT PROVIDENCE: ATTENDANCE, LENGTH OF STAY, TERMINATION

A. Attendance

The original evaluation design included a comparison of school attendance rates prior to entering Providence to the attendance experience of the youths while at Providence. Unfortunately, after considerable efforts by the Providence staff, it was found that attendance information could not be located for a large percentage of the students. In addition, when this information was available it was usually only in terms of annual absences. The primary problem in locating records is that a third of the students were not enrolled in school just before joining Providence, so there was no current school contact from whom to obtain the information.

Additionally, in some cases the youth had transferred at mid year which made recovery of the full record difficult. In other cases the youth had been enrolled in elementary school which meant there was no centralized location to access records. As a result of all these problems, this evaluation is limited to the attendance rates while at Providence.

Overall, it was found that the 118 youths were absent 2370 days of a possible 14,423 days of attendance, or 16.4 percent of the possible days. Computed per youth, this means that the absence rate per youth is 20.3 days out of a 123.3 possible days of attendance. The data on attendance, presented in Table 15, are based on the entire period each youth was at Providence, beginning with data for September, 1972. In general, the Providence students show a high rate of attendance. Nearly half (48.7 percent) fall in the highest attendance category (0 to 9 percent absent). These figures are particularly impressive when we consider that only two-thirds of the students were enrolled in other schools when they entered Providence and that many of those enrolled had been experiencing problems of excessive truancy.

TABLE 15

ATTENDANCE RATE AT PROVIDENCE

<u>Percent of Days Absent</u>	<u>N</u>	<u>Percent</u>
0-9%	57	48.7%
10-19%	24	20.5%
20-29%	14	12.0%
30-39%	10	8.5%
40% or more	12	10.3%
	117*	100.0%

\*One youth has been excluded from this Table because he was enrolled at Providence for one day.

B. Length of Stay at Providence; Termination

Many projects seeking to resocialize adjudicated juveniles with extensive court referral records suffer from a rapid turnover in their client populations. Dropout rates are frequently high and the average time enrollees remain in the program is often short. One result is that, even if a program is potentially beneficial, it is not able to retain youths for a sufficiently long period to be an important influence in changing a youth's behavior.

An examination was made of the amount of time youths spend at Providence. Since 50 of the 118 youths are still there, the information presented in Table 16 is divided into youths who have terminated from the program and those still in the program. We find that Providence is successful in holding most youths in its program

TABLE 16

AMOUNT OF TIME COMPLETED AT PROVIDENCE, GIVEN SEPARATELY FOR TERMINATED AND NON-TERMINATED STUDENTS

Length of Time at Providence	Terminated Youths (N)	Non-terminated Youths (N)
12 months or more	11	19
9 to 12 months	8	0
6 to 9 months	25	6
2 to 6 months	15	25
Less than 2 months	9	0
	68	50

for a reasonably extended period. Nearly two-thirds (64.7 percent or 44) of the terminated students completed at least six months in the program and exactly one-half (25) of the students remaining in the program have already completed six months.

Terminated youths remained at Providence for an average of 232.9 days. The students still enrolled at the end of the valuation period had been there an average of 271.0 days. These figures understate the success of the program in retaining the

youths with which it is working. Several of the youths who terminated after very short stays had actually been temporarily placed at Providence in lieu of a more appropriate (but unavailable) placement. Several others were found to be inappropriately placed at Providence due to retardation or emotional disturbance.

Youths most frequently terminate from the Providence program not because of any problems but rather because they have graduated. This was true of 27 (39.7 percent) of the 68 instances of termination. Of these 27, 19 were placed in another school at the time of termination. The full range of reasons for termination is presented in Table 17. The reason listed as "juvenile Court referral or action" includes both a new referral to the court causing a new placement as a part of the disposition and those instances in which a D. J. O. (juvenile probation officer) or Aftercare worker from Missouri Hills have decided to change the youth's placement. Overall, a majority of the youths (38, or 55.9 percent) were terminated because of graduation or placement in another school program.

TABLE 17

TERMINATION REASON

Reason for Termination	Terminated Youths (N)	Percent
Graduated	27	39.7%
Juvenile Court referral or action	15	22.1
Placed in another school	11	16.1
Poor attendance	1	1.5
Returned to Missouri Hills	2	2.9
Other (family moved, outgrew program, program could not meet needs due to emotional/mental retardation)	12	17.7
	68	100.1

VIII. PROGRAM PERFORMANCE: CONTACTS

An objective of Providence as stated in the grant application, is to maintain monthly contact with the family of each youth and with the Juvenile Court or any other agency responsible for him. Information on contacts was examined to assess the total number and the monthly rate of contacts made with the family, the Juvenile Court, and other agencies. The Providence staff made 972 contacts with families of the 118 youths during the period from September, 1972 through December, 1973. In addition, they made 519 contacts with the Juvenile Court and 309 contacts with other agencies. Table 18 gives additional summary information on these contacts.

TABLE 18

CONTACT ACTIVITY BY PROVIDENCE STAFF

<u>Agency/Person Contacted</u>	<u>Total Number of Contacts</u>	<u>Average Per Youth</u>	<u>Median</u>	<u>Range</u>
Family	972	8.2	6	0-48
Juvenile Court	519	4.4	3	0-29
Other Agencies	309	2.6	2	0-31

The extent to which monthly contacts occurred was also analyzed. The purpose of making frequent contacts is to communicate problems that have developed and progress that is being made. It was found that the families of 33.7 percent of the youths received at least one contact each month. In an additional 26.9 percent of the cases contacts were made in every month except one while the youth was enrolled in the program. It can thus be said that in over half of the cases (60.6 percent) there was fairly regular contact with the family. The remaining 39.4 percent of the cases had a lower relative frequency of program contact with the family.

Juvenile Court contacts are impossible to analyze at this point since, contrary to the plans of program operation, many of the youths had their cases

closed by the Juvenile Court while still at Providence. Other cases were in transit between Juvenile Officers for a significant amount of time. During the evaluation period adequate records were not maintained on the time periods when cases were open or closed. Thus the fact that the court was contacted only a small fraction of the months the youth was at Providence does not preclude the possibility that the court was contacted each month that the youth's case was actually active at the court. In the next evaluation a change in data collection procedures should eliminate this problem. Moreover, monitoring contacts should be considerably easier since most Providence youths under court jurisdiction are to be carried by the Special Probation Unit.

IX. PERFORMANCE AFTER LEAVING PROVIDENCE

A. Referrals

To be an effective program, Providence needs to have a long term impact on youths, rather than only affecting behavior while at Providence. As a consequence the evaluation design stipulates that the behavior of the youths will be followed for an entire year after they leave Providence. At the present time only 56 youths (of the 68 who have terminated) have been out of the Providence program for at least six months. The follow up examination of court referrals presented here is limited to these 56 youths.

Table 19 compares the number of referrals during the six months subsequent to termination to referrals during the six months prior to joining Providence. These data show that 41 youths (73.2 percent) either had a lower referral rate after leaving Providence than they did just before entering the program or had no referrals. Only five youths (8.9 percent) had a higher number of referrals in the later period. There were 10 (17.9 percent) who showed no change. In all just 17 youths had any referrals

TABLE 20

NUMBER OF IMPACT REFERRALS SIX MONTHS AFTER TERMINATION FROM PROVIDENCE COMPARED TO SIX MONTHS PRIOR TO ENTRY

Number of Impact Referrals Six Months Subsequent to Termination

Number of Impact Referrals Six Months Prior to Entry

	0	1	2	3	Total
2	2			1	3
1	12	1			13
0	37	3			40
Total	51	4		1	56

Note: This Table is based on the 56 youths who have completed six months subsequent to termination.

An examination of the relationship between background characteristics

of individual youths, indicators of their performance at Providence, and post-Providence referral rates showed no clear differences between those with referrals and those without. However, several findings are of note. For one thing, youths were not immune to future referrals even when attendance at Providence was nearly perfect (eight out of 25 with 0-9 percent of the days absent had a subsequent referral). In addition, graduation from Providence, as contrasted to termination by Juvenile Court action, does not distinguish between those with referrals and those without. Neither the length of time spent at Providence or the occurrence of referrals while at Providence are clearly related to subsequent referrals. For instance, of the 37 without referrals while at Providence, 35.1 percent (13) had referrals in the first six months after termination.

These findings must be viewed with caution because they are based on relatively few individuals (56), 17 of whom had referrals during this time.

during the six months after leaving Providence. Eleven of these had nondismissed referrals including three nondismissed Impact referrals and eight nondismissed referrals of a less serious nature (but still ones which would have been criminal offenses had the youths been adults). From the data in Table 19 it is possible to compute the number of referrals for the two six month periods considered. In the earlier period there were 52 referrals while in the subsequent period there were 25 referrals, a decrease of 52 percent.

TABLE 19

NUMBER OF REFERRALS SIX MONTHS AFTER TERMINATION FROM PROVIDENCE COMPARED TO SIX MONTHS PRIOR TO ENTRY

Number of Referrals Six Months Subsequent to Termination

Number of Referrals Six Months Prior to Entry

	0	1	2	3	4	Total
3	1	1				2
2	8	1	4	1		14
1	11	6	1			18
0	19	2	1			22
Total	39	10	6	1		56

Note: This Table is based on the 56 youths who have completed six months subsequent to termination.

Table 20 shows that only five youths had Impact referrals in the six month period subsequent to Providence (three of these being dismissed). There were 51 youths (91.1 percent) who either showed a decrease in Impact referrals during this period or had no referrals and four youths (7.1 percent) who showed an increase and one youth (1.8 percent) who had one referral during each period.

B. Aftercare Placements

The Aftercare Department of Providence assumed responsibility for 45 of the 68 youths who terminated from Providence. The 23 not handled by Providence Aftercare consisted of 18 who returned to Missouri Hills or were newly committed to an institution (Missouri Hills, State Board of Training Schools, or Boys Town) and five who either moved from town, or were removed from the program due to early parental disapproval of the youth's enrollment at Providence.

Of the 45 under Providence Aftercare, 82.2 percent were placed in a full time school setting, and 11.1 percent were placed in the Student Work Assistance Program. The other two youths were initially placed on a job or in a children's home outside of St. Louis. Twenty-two of the 45 youths had a second or third placement while on aftercare. In half of these instances the change in placement was a move to a different school setting deemed more appropriate for the youth. Such transferring between schools will likely decrease as the Aftercare Department becomes increasingly knowledgeable about the particular strengths and weaknesses of certain schools and their ability to meet the needs of different types of students.

The Aftercare records of a sample of 19 youths were examined more closely to determine problems during Aftercare and the successfulness of placements. Most of these 19 students have had difficulties thus far in their placements. Nearly half had adjustment problems when they entered large classrooms in large schools after the intense individualized experience of a small classroom at Providence. Their adjustment difficulties were manifested in frequently missed classes or initial academic failure. Many of these youths have received Providence initiated tutoring and counseling. Only one of these youths has been suspended from school and this youth is now doing well on his second (work study) placement. Another nine of the 19 received good to excellent reports from schools. Attendance was reported to be

regular and no outstanding difficulties had developed. Two of the 19 youths who were difficult to place, returned to Providence and one has now left again, to begin a vocational rehabilitation program.

The Aftercare staff, as well as other Providence staff, frequently comment on the paucity of school placement possibilities. Youths leaving Providence by and large did not previously succeed in the public schools. Many, even with an increased skill level, and improved motivation and self-concept, cannot succeed in traditional classrooms where teacher attention to their needs is severely limited.

It is quite likely that without additional alternatives many of these youths will encounter overwhelming difficulties in attempting to complete their education after Providence.

XI. FACTORS WHICH MAY AFFECT SECTIONS OF THE ABOVE ANALYSIS

1. The design of the current evaluation is based on a single group before-after comparison (see footnote on page ). As a result, there are limitations on the interpretation of results. Other factors which impinge on a youth during his Providence experience may cause some or all of the changes in behavior that occurred. With this design, it is not possible to conclude that the Providence program alone caused the changes in behavior. Rather one can only observe that subsequent to participation in the Providence program certain changes in behavior either did or did not occur.

2. Referrals to the Court are an imperfect measure of a youth's involvement in behavior which would warrant a referral. Our referral analysis is obviously limited to discovered and reported instances of misbehavior.

3. Although the criteria for admission to Providence do not specify an exceptionally high prior referral rate, many youths referred do in fact have a high rate, including a recent referral. One would not expect, however, that youths with an extremely high referral rate would maintain this high rate even if they did not enter the program. This is true because of the lack of exact correspondence of known referrals to actual delinquent behavior and because of fluctuations in behavior. Such a change is generally referred to in the evaluation literature as a regression artifact and refers to the fact that extreme scores at one point in time are likely to regress toward the mean at a later point in time.

4. Given that we are trying to examine major changes in behavior, the time period examined in this report is relatively short. An apparent lack of change over the short run is not necessarily indicative of no

long term change and, conversely, changes that do occur may be lost later as other factors impinge on a youth.

XII. RECOMMENDATIONS

Two areas of program operation stand out as needing reexamination.

1. The staff should assess the difficulties encountered in trying to contact all families as regularly as planned. It might be most important to provide disproportionately high numbers of contacts to families where the possible benefits for a youth's development are greatest. This may imply, given time limitations on staff, that the minimum contact with all families needs to be revised downward. Alternatively it may mean that the original goal remains important and achievable and a change in priorities and the allocation of staff time and efforts will be necessary to enable the program to meet this goal.

2. The Aftercare staff has encountered some difficulty in finding appropriate placements for students. Efforts are under way by the staff to become more familiar with the strengths and weaknesses of different placements and their suitability for a given type of student. Increased efforts in this area coupled with more feedback to other Providence staff will hopefully help in providing both the placement selection and preparation for placement provided to students.

Given the present resources at Providence, it would appear that the demands on the time and energy of the Aftercare staff will not decrease. As a consequence the problems of placement will remain significant. There is a very real problem of maintaining the gains made during enrollment at Providence when a youth leaves and enters a less supportive environment where failure is more likely and the label of delinquency sets him apart from most. The Aftercare staff will thus, need to devote considerable energies to detect problems at an early stage and to provide

meaningful services. In addition, continued pre-placement work with each student is needed to provide continuity in working with the youth. Also, it is necessary in order to have some familiarity with the youth to aid in understanding placement problems if they arise. The success of After-care is obviously crucial for the Providence program as a whole. Previous evaluations have often documented the failure of other innovative programs to maintain the gains of youths once the primary special services are removed. While the needs in this area depend on the number of youths expected to be on Aftercare status, it would be unfortunate if, for lack of funds, the Aftercare component were ever understaffed. Thus, any requests for additional staff or resources in this area should be seriously considered by either the current or any future funding sources.

Potential understaffing, however, is not the most serious problem in placement. The larger problem is the lack of suitable placements for the youths. Funding agencies and other relevant agencies in the city should be aware of the paucity of placements for youths, such as those at Providence, who have found it difficult to function within the traditionally structured public school setting. Continuing efforts need to be promoted to make the schools more responsive to the needs of these youths.

**END**