

# EDUCATION SERVICES

*Joan Wimmer*  
*Director of Education*  
*(850) 922-5375*  
*joan.wimmer@djj.state.fl.us*



The Florida Legislature determined that education is the single most important factor in the rehabilitation of adjudicated delinquent youth and stated: *"It is the goal of the Legislature that youth in the juvenile justice system are afforded the opportunity to obtain a high quality education"*. The mission of the DJJ Office of Education is to support this goal by providing professional training to all education stakeholders; supporting realistic and relevant academic and pre-employment curricula for DJJ student clients; and maximizing the resources that support DJJ educational initiatives. The Office of Education accomplishes this mission by focusing on the three educational objectives listed in the Department's Strategic Plan:

- Develop and implement accountability measures to ensure that youth who are placed in the custody of the department attain measurable academic improvement, and when appropriate, learn a vocational skill that will help the youth acquire employment following release from department supervision.
- Increase opportunities for industry-recognized certification of youth in residential programs.
- Establish multi-agency collaboration in the delivery of education services for at-risk youth.

The Office of Education works to support these objectives with myriad stakeholders including youth, families, Department and contracted education and program personnel, district school boards, the Department of Education, Workforce Florida, Inc., regional workforce boards, the Department of Children and Families and the Florida Juvenile Justice Foundation. Cross-program training is ongoing to facilitate access of juvenile justice-involved youth to available resources, partnerships, and opportunities.

The Florida Legislature stipulates that DOE and DJJ serve as the point of contact for resolving issues not addressed by district school boards and to provide each Department's participation in four primary areas:

- Training
- Academic Performance
- Career Counseling
- Collaboration

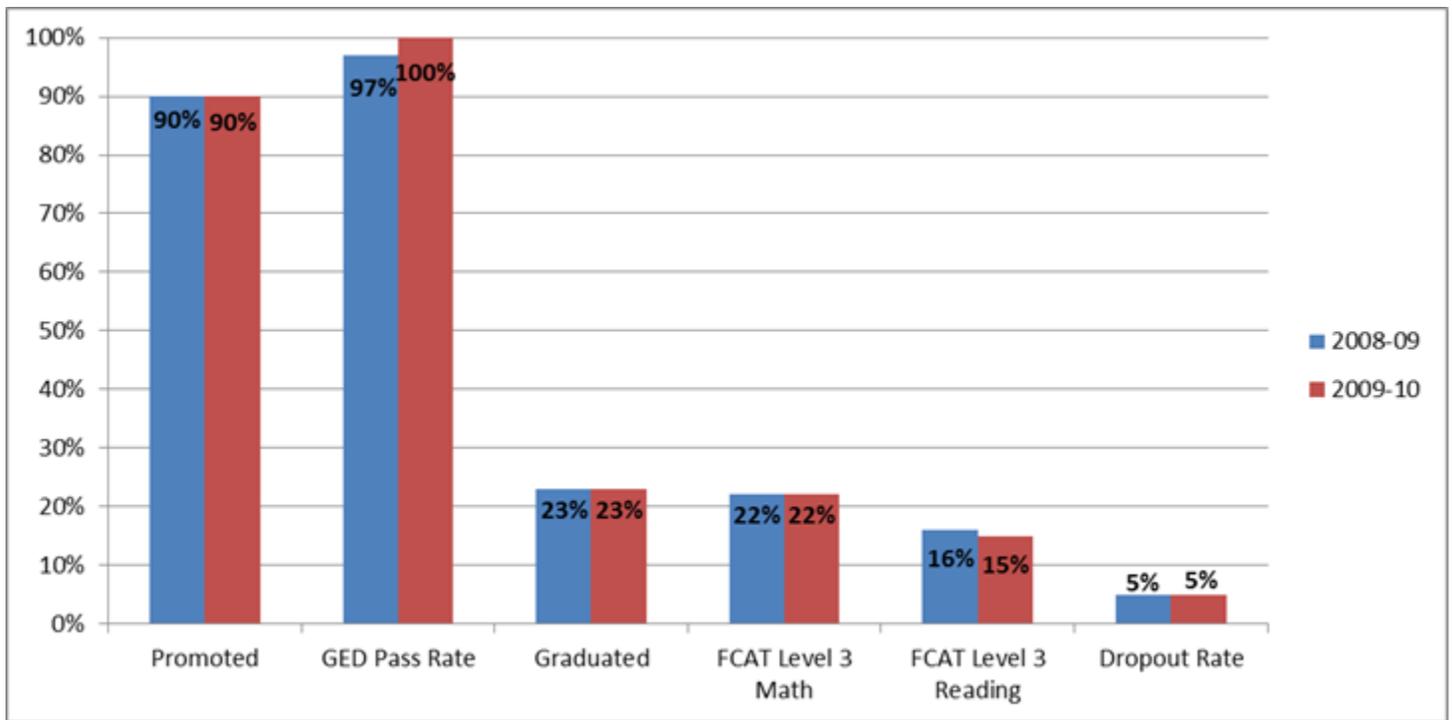
## Training

Representatives of the Office of Education provide training and technical assistance to stakeholders and partners throughout the year. Assistance is provided by telephone, e-mail, web site information, site visits, regional meetings, and statewide training events. For example, the Office of Education hosted more than 500 professionals invested in education, workplace readiness, and transition programs at eight regional meetings throughout Florida.

**Academic Performance**

Florida Statutes and the Florida Administrative Code support academic success by requiring continuity of educational programming for students in juvenile detention centers, day treatment programs, and residential commitment settings. DJJ educational programs are designed to meet the unique educational needs of each student, half of whom are in ninth or tenth grade and more than 25% are significantly behind in school. In 2009-10, 31,056 students enrolled in juvenile justice education programs and 9,146 students participated for at least 50% of the prescribed length of the program. The following exhibit depicts key outcome data for those students.

**Key Juvenile Justice Education Indicators  
FY 2008-09 and FY 2009-10**



Source: Department of Education 2011 Annual Dropout Prevention Report

Students in DJJ residential and day treatment programs took the Basic Achievement Skills Inventory (BASI) entry and exit assessments that address math, reading, and language arts. BASI student outcome data include having a valid entry and exit assessment record and demonstrating meaningful growth, i.e., the learning gains a student makes between the entry and exit scores. In FY2009–10, 51% of 3,036 students demonstrated meaningful growth in math and 55% of 3,041 students demonstrated meaningful growth in reading, an increase of approximately 20% over the previous year.

Students who have earned their diplomas also have opportunities to pursue post-secondary education while in the programs. The Florida Juvenile Justice Foundation and several providers assisted more than forty students who attended on-line state college while in commitment. In 2010-11, students in juvenile justice facilities earned 68 college credits.

## Career Counseling

The Office of Education works diligently to enhance and expand Career and Technical Education (CTE) programs, identify and procure documents essential for employment, and bolster the transition process to increase employment opportunities for DJJ students.

*Vocational Program Levels:* The Office of Education works with education and training programs at 132 schools within prevention, detention, day treatment, and residential programs. Since the average stay in a detention facility is approximately 10 days, there is minimal participation in CTE programs. CTE programs are primarily associated with the 107 residential and day treatment facilities and are reported as one of three levels:

- Level 1: Pre-vocational includes counseling or instruction contributing to personal accountability skills and behaviors appropriate for age groups and ability levels that lead to good work habits.
- Level 2: Incorporates Level 1 competencies and provides an orientation to a broad scope of career choices, based upon personal abilities, aptitudes and interests, and exploring and gaining knowledge of occupation options and the level of effort required to achieve them.
- Level 3: Incorporates the first and second levels and is able to provide recognized industry prerequisites for attaining recognized points of completion within particular trades or vocations.

Level 3 programs offer certifications in more than twenty different areas, including, but not limited to, automotive repair, book keeping, carpentry, culinary arts, digital design, information technology, and welding. While the small size of the juvenile justice education programs makes it difficult to include a full time CTE instructor, many have worked to include work experience, readiness and certification opportunities. For example, Home Builders Institute provides career and technical training to at-risk and adjudicated youth at eight sites throughout Florida. These programs receive funding through the Florida Department of Juvenile Justice. Outcomes for 2010 include:

- 265 participants earned Pre-Apprentice Certificate Training (PACT) certificates.
- 221 participants were eligible for placement.
- 186 participants were placed in a job, military, or school.
- 251 participants that earned a PACT certificate did not re-offend during follow up, representing a 94.7% non-recidivism rate.
- \$8.21 average wage at placement.
- 84% placement rate for graduates.

*Financial Grants:* The U.S. Department of Education provides federal funds, i.e., Perkins Grants, to develop more fully the academic, career, and technical skills of students who elect to enroll in career and technical

programs As shown in the following exhibit, grants totaling \$412,419 were awarded to seven programs for FY 2011-12.

### 2011 Perkins Grants Awarded to DJJ Educational Program

Agency	DJJ Site	Focus Area	Amount
Cypress School District	Cypress Creek Academy	Information Technology	\$70,000
Glades School District	AMIkids Last Chance Ranch	Energy Technology	\$69,895
Liberty School District	Juvenile Unit for Specialized Treatment	Manufacturing	\$70,000
Madison School District	Twin Oaks Vocational Academy	Construction	\$70,000
Manatee School District	Palmetto Youth Academy	Information Technology Business Management & Administration	\$69,125
Okeechobee School District	Okeechobee Intensive Halfway House	Business Management & Administration	\$23,889
Polk School District	Avon Park Youth Development Center	Transportation, Distribution and Logistics	\$39,510

The Florida Juvenile Justice Foundation (FJJF) is a not-for-profit corporation and a direct-support organization for DJJ. The Foundation assists students, their parents, and citizens by promoting delinquency prevention, intervention and educational opportunities for youth. The Foundation manages the Youth Investment Award Scholarship Program, using funds donated by the Eckerd Family Foundation. The awards may be used for tuition, equipment, supplies, transportation, education or employability assistance. The Office of Education assists youth, families and the FJJF Director in processing the Youth Investment Award. In 2010, more than \$75,000 dollars were contributed to education or employability skills training of 135 students.

The Florida Legislature allocated funding for the Ready to Work program to allow qualified individuals the opportunity to earn credentials that demonstrate the ability to enter the workforce with the skills needed to succeed. Pre- and post-instruction assessments are used to identify specific skills that indicate a competence level to enter the workforce at an entry-level position or above. It also provides targeted instruction in the specific employability skill(s) for which mastery has not been demonstrated. Since allocated by the Florida legislature in the fall of 2007, 2,445 DJJ students took a Ready to Work assessment; 1,750 students took all three placement tests; and 1,117 earned credentials:

- 107 Gold
- 612 Silver
- 398 Bronze

## Collaboration

The Department successfully partnered with numerous federal, state, and local agencies. Mini-grants provided by the Transition Education Network increased school-based enterprise and internet-based services to youth in residential commitment programs. For example:

- Tallahassee Community College funded a “New Start” scholarship providing for an annual award to a juvenile justice-involved youth to complete community college.
- The Banner Center on CAPE Career Academies provided for 72 youth to earn OSHA certificates while completing juvenile justice commitment programs.
- The National Association of Masonry Education & Foundation provided training and job placement services to youth in residential commitment programs. Ten residential programs arranged to have staff attend CORE training sponsored by the National Center for Construction Education Research.
- Credit-retrieval and remedial reading opportunities were made available to juvenile justice-involved youth by the Northeast Florida Education Consortium .
- The Panhandle Education Consortium offered statewide on-line teacher certification.
- DJJ also partnered with Ready to Work state and regional consultants, the Association of Mason Tenders, the Able Trust Fund/Florida High School/High Tech, Communities in Schools, and the United States Naval Academy .

In 2010 the Senate Criminal Justice Committee allocated \$1 million targeted to enhance educational and vocational opportunities for DJJ youth. These funds were used to contract with the following service providers in a four-county area to help at-risk and delinquent youth obtain employment: The Corporation to Develop Communities of Tampa and Goodwill Industries serving Hillsborough County, Mt. Zion Human Services in Pinellas County, United Community Centers in Manatee County, and Family Resources Centers serving Pinellas, Manatee and Sarasota Counties. These agencies assisted more than 400 youth referred for services and placed 95 youth into paid employment.

Matching funds were allocated by Workforce Florida, Inc. to two regional workforce boards to train juvenile justice-involved youth to work in pilot programs in four counties: Pinellas, Sarasota, Manatee, and Hillsborough. As a result, 216 youth enrolled in training programs, 175 completed the programs, and 160 youth earned employment.