



# EDUCATIONAL SERVICES

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Section 1003.52(1), Florida Statutes, states “the Legislature found that education is the single most important factor in the rehabilitation of adjudicated delinquent youth in the custody of Department of Juvenile Justice (DJJ) programs.” 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 Department of Education (DOE) serves as the lead agency for juvenile justice education programs, curriculum, support services, and resources. To this end, DOE and DJJ each designate a Coordinator for Juvenile Justice Education Programs to serve as the point of contact for resolving issues not addressed by district school boards and to provide each department’s participation in the following activities:

- Training, collaborating, and coordinating with the Department of Juvenile Justice, district school boards, educational contract providers, and juvenile justice providers, whether state operated or contracted.
- Collecting information on the academic performance of students in juvenile justice programs and reporting on the results.
- Developing academic and career protocols that provide guidance to district school boards and providers in all aspects of education programming, including records transfer and transition.
- Prescribing the roles of program personnel and interdepartmental district school board or provider collaboration strategies.

Annually school districts provide educational services to approximately 45,000 students in juvenile justice facilities at a cost of \$90,683,718 (2006-07). Average daily participation in juvenile justice education programs consists of 830 students served in DJJ Prevention programs, 982 in community intervention/day treatment programs funded by DJJ Probation and Community Intervention, 1,831 in regional juvenile detention center educational programs and 4,500 in state operated or contracted residential commitment programs. Of these students, 76% are male and 24% are female. 72% of the students in juvenile justice education programs are enrolled in grades 8-10 with 37% in grade 9. 73% are overage for grade placement and have been retained one or more years and 40% are eligible for exceptional student education programs. Of these students who are eligible for exceptional student education programs, 39% are identified as students with learning disabilities.

This chapter reports on juvenile justice education categorized with above statutory requirements. All efforts of the Department of Juvenile Justice, Office of Education, are consistent with legislative mandates, stakeholder input, and Departmental strategic plans. Federal, state, school district, and provider mandates and policies have to be integrated at the direct service level by responsible school districts and educational providers, calling for effective collaboration, flexibility and creativity as small juvenile justice programs serve a population of students ranging from illiterate to post-secondary capabilities. Expectations for subject-specific teacher certification apply regardless of the number of teachers assigned to facilities.

The support of the Florida Legislature has contributed to a system of juvenile justice education prioritizing continuity of education for students, including those in a temporary self-educational environment as a result of judicial or state sanctions. School district and contracted providers work continuously to meet the individual needs of each student. Youth in regional juvenile detention centers and residential programs involve students from more than one district, providing for significant educational programming challenges, and registration/withdrawal and transition workloads unique to the juvenile justice programs. Educational personnel assigned to work in state owned or operated facilities also require effective collaboration in regard to student and teacher safety, the adequacy of the learning environment, maintenance and retrofitting of DJJ facilities for DOE mandated student access to the internet.

This year, the Legislature initiated an Office of Program Policy Analysis & Government Accountability (OPPAGA) comprehensive review of educational programs within the juvenile justice system to include youth who also have their high school diploma or GED and provided recommendations to address the needs for program and instructional flexibility to improve academic and vocational outcomes of youth served.

Prior to this study, DJJ Office of Education also contributed to an OPPAGA report specific to the needs of youth in exceptional education programs served by more than one school district as a result of placement in residential programs. Resulting recommendations included the Department of Children and Families and Agency for Persons with Disabilities establishing cooperative agreements similar to the Department of Juvenile Justice and Department of Education and local school districts to improve procedures for school-to-school notification of youth placed in programs from out-of-county.

The current review of juvenile justice education programs will provide an update to the Legislature as a follow-up to the 1998 comprehensive report as well as the 2006 Interim Senate Report. Personnel assigned to this report spent extensive hours with DJJ and DOE staff, school district leaders and program specialists and visited a variety of programs throughout the state to improve the accuracy of prospective recommendations. The effort of this complex undertaking is expected to provide the Legislature with practical recommendations to assist the Florida DOE, DJJ and associated school districts with responsibilities for this student population. State-level oversight provides an additional level of accountability for these students lacking school choice due to judicial involvement. State and local efforts also work to recognize the dedicated personnel working “behind the razor wire,” and in less restrictive juvenile justice educational settings. The 1999 Juvenile Justice Education Institute, initiated as a result of the 1998 OPPAGA study, was the first forum for honoring juvenile justice educators of the year. School districts have since included these teachers in their district-wide efforts and many have since been honored by their local school districts.

## ***Training and Coordination***

Approximately 2,312 persons were directly trained by the Juvenile Justice Education Director during the first ten months of 2008. Coordinating the variety of resources able to directly impact the education and employability of juvenile justice involved students requires awareness and accessibility. The continuum of educational programs and resources is available to youth served by juvenile justice prevention, intervention, day treatment, detention, residential commitment and those provided with services following completion of a residential program. Juvenile justice programs strive to maintain educational coursework comparable to students’ prior schedule, although many serve youth that have not been attending school prior to their juvenile justice system involvement. Several school districts and residential programs have demonstrated outstanding efforts to improve academic outcomes and employability of students while in their care. It is essential that school personnel collaborate with juvenile justice personnel and contract providers to maximize available resources and integrate as many educational opportunities as possible into the overall schedule. Quality assurance standards direct the timely transfer of records and a technical assistance paper on Transition is available from the Florida Department of Education.

Individuals and organizations invested in the academic and vocational success of juvenile justice involved students have access to a myriad of resources on the Department of Juvenile Justice website. These are particularly significant as juvenile justice education personnel operate on a 250 school day calendar. The education section of the Florida juvenile justice website was

substantially revised this past year to improve consumer utilization, for example, an alphabetized listing of responsible school districts providing education to the 150+ programs operated or funded by the Department of Juvenile Justice. Numbers fluctuate slightly due to program transitions. A listing of transition resources is posted as the office continues to encourage programs to work to incorporate the Ready to Work Certification program within their schedules in addition to services from regional workforce boards and other student services. The website is located at <http://www.djj.state.fl.us/Education/index.html>.

Florida is unique in hosting an annual training event specific to the needs of school districts responsible for juvenile justice education programs. The Office of Education provides specific technical assistance and training to students, parents, juvenile justice personnel, programs, school districts, other agencies and stakeholder groups upon request in addition to initiating collaborative partnerships on behalf of students of shared responsibilities and opportunities. Activities this past year included participating in the DJJ Blueprint Commission meeting, annual Juvenile Justice Education Institute, the Department's Zero Tolerance Summit, the Florida Association of School Resource Officers Annual Training Conference, Florida Council on Crime and Delinquency, DCF Dependency Summit, DCF Circuit Administrators and Community-Based Care leadership, Communities in Schools Board of Directors meetings, Florida High School/High Tech Training, Strengthening Youth Partnerships, Florida Ready to Work and other stakeholders. Training topics include collaborating to apply for regional workforce board services, Ready to Work, available Perkins grants from the Department of Education, the Youth Investment Award process, participating in the VSA arts Artist in Residence Program, cooperative agreements and contracts, school improvement committees/facility advisory boards, the Florida Juvenile Justice Foundation, curriculum and instruction, transition, conflict resolution, the juvenile justice education quality assurance process and individual student requests for transitions, proof of high school diploma, assistance to military recruiters, vendors and volunteers interested in improving the outcomes of Florida's juvenile justice involved youth.

### ***Academic Performance***

A stronger emphasis on school and community-based prevention is essential to developing alternatives to arrest and incarceration. Reading statistics from the U.S. Department of Education, 2001, indicate that 70% of prison inmates are functionally illiterate, 75% of unemployed adults are illiterate, 75% of school dropouts are illiterate, 85% of juvenile offenders are illiterate and 86% of unwed teenage mothers are illiterate. Illiteracy costs the United States more than \$225 billion a year in lost productivity. Some states now base their projections for future prison construction, in part, on the number of second graders who are not reading at grade level.

In recognition of the lack of small programs to generate adequate educational funding for self-sufficiency, the Florida Legislature continued the inclusion of a supplemental allocation factor of \$944.19 per student to juvenile justice education programs. This was slightly reduced statewide based upon subsequently reduced revenues. If a school district provided incentive funding for teachers to work in a failing school, then an equal incentive bonus was to be provided to teachers teaching in juvenile justice facilities. A full copy of the appropriations bill can be found at: [http://election.dos.state.fl.us/laws/07laws/ch\\_2007-072.pdf](http://election.dos.state.fl.us/laws/07laws/ch_2007-072.pdf)

Prevention programs with a full-time, self-contained educational program are funded by the Florida Department of Juvenile Justice through contracts with PACE Centers for Girls to provide an opportunity for a better future through education, counseling, training and advocacy. PACE Center for Girls operates 17 centers across Florida. Each center has a contract with the local school district to provide a minimum of 300 academic minutes per day, 250 days per year. The year-round model is intended to address educational failure. According to one source, the single largest predictor of subsequent arrest among adolescent girls is having been suspended, expelled or held back during middle school.<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> *Justice By Gender*, joint report issued by the American Bar Association and the National Bar Association (2001).

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In 2007-08, PACE served 2,163 girls in grades 7-12. The average age of girls at PACE was 15 years. Academically, PACE girls were two years behind grade level peers in school. At the time of entrance into PACE:

- 69% had been suspended or expelled.
- 67% had failed one or more classes in the past year.
- 48% were 2 or more years behind grade level peers in reading.
- 57% were 2 or more years behind grade level peers in math.
- One in five had missed more than 50 days of school in the past year.

While attending PACE in 2007-08:

- 91% of girls improved academically as indicated through GPA's, credits earned, or grade level promotion.
- 76% of girls advanced one full grade level as indicated through BASI scores and grade level promotions.
- 43 - Age eligible girls received a High School diploma or GED.
- 100% participated daily in a minimum of 50 minutes of "SPIRITED GIRLS," PACE's gender responsive life skills development course.
- Three years after transitioning from PACE, 88% of girls had no involvement with the juvenile justice system and 85% were enrolled in college, other appropriate educational setting or were employed.

The Department of Juvenile Justice also funds community intervention/day treatment and residential programs through contracts with the Associated Marines Institutes. In fiscal year 2007-08, Florida day treatment and residential programs operating under the Associated Marine Institutes awarded 118 high school diplomas. An additional 4,560 high school credits were earned with an additional 34 college credits awarded for youth who had already earned their high school diploma while being served in the AMI facility. Along with these outstanding academic results, AMI had three facilities recognized as "Exemplary" education programs in the state of Florida by the Juvenile Justice Educational Enhancement Program (JJEPP). These programs were: Crossroads Wilderness Institute, New Port Richey Marine Institute and the Emerald Coast Marine Institute.

Accountability for juvenile justice education programs are provided by state and local oversight. Educational statutes mandate a quality assurance process administered by the Florida Department of Education in addition to a designated education coordinator funded by the Department of Juvenile Justice. Comprehensive efforts include state and provider program monitoring, contract management, self-evaluation, school district designated transition contacts, mandated annual review of all juvenile justice cooperative agreements and contracts by the Department of Education (DOE), data and progress monitoring, published juvenile justice education quality assurance reports submitted to responsible school superintendents and annual reports to the Florida Legislature by the Florida Department of Education and Department of Juvenile Justice.

The Florida Education & Training Placement Information Program (FETPIP) also tracks juvenile justice student involvement with quarterly reports based upon social security numbers reported to the Department of Education. According to their fall 2005 Findings, youth attending post-secondary education, employed or a combination of both indicated lower rates of recidivism than the statewide average of forty percent.

Statutory requirements for juvenile justice education programs in Florida are addressed in Section 1003.52, Florida Statutes and State Board of Education Rule 6A-6.05281 Educational Programs for Youth in Department of Juvenile Justice Detention, Commitment, Day Treatment, or Early Delinquency Intervention Programs. The Department of Education produces an annual report, Developing Effective Education in Department of Juvenile Justice and Other Dropout Prevention Programs, required by the Florida Legislature. Results of the statutorily-mandated standardized academic assessment are also in process. Preliminary outcomes were shared at the annual Juvenile Justice Education Institute outcome and via e-mail to non-participants as districts,

providers to obtain the most accurate picture possible of statewide academic progress.

Juvenile justice programs are also increasingly in need of cost-effective computer-assisted instructional options such as credit-retrieval programs, distance learning and virtual education. For example, the number of students enrolled in Florida Virtual School grew from 8 students in 2007 to 125 during the current year according to self-reported data collection. The funds from the Eckerd Family Foundation/Florida Juvenile Justice Foundation partnership will also allow for tuition payments for students committed to residential commitment programs able to complete post-secondary education on-line in addition to increasing work-experience, vocational training and assisting with individualized student transition services.

The Florida Juvenile Justice Foundation is continuing the William Bankhead Scholarship in partnership with the Office of Education. A partnership formed with the Tallahassee Community College (TCC) Foundation in the fall of 2006 piloted legislatively available matching funds for scholarships. CSX was the first corporation to contribute \$5,000 to this fund with subsequent match provided during 2007 by the Florida Legislature. Twenty students have received scholarships from the Juvenile Justice Foundation to date and scholarships remain available from TCC pending further applications.

Research has also shown that participation in the arts leads to enhanced academic progress, test scores and improved social skills, an essential ingredient of successful employment. The Department of Juvenile Justice has a continuing relationship with VSA Arts of Florida. This program makes it possible for artists to work with youth in prevention, detention, day treatment and residential settings. Youth benefit from the instruction of professional artists and are able to express themselves through positive outlets. Coordination and scheduling of artists willing to work with juvenile justice involved youth represents an additional workload for educational and juvenile justice personnel. Over thirty applications were received for \$4,000 of total available funds in increments of \$500 grants from dedicated personnel on behalf of juvenile justice involved youth and the artists' communities. In fiscal year 2008-09, VSA Arts of Florida will provide eight artists in residence programs at the following sites:

- Cypress Creek Juvenile Offender Correctional Center
- Broward Intensive Halfway House
- Impact House, Duval County
- Marion Regional Juvenile Detention Center
- Okeechobee Juvenile Offender Correction Center
- Price Halfway House, Lee County
- St. John's Regional Detention Center
- Jackson Juvenile Offender Correction Center

This report also constitutes the requirement that juvenile educational programs impact youth literacy required by section 985.625, Florida Statutes. Each of Florida's Juvenile Justice education programs have a cooperative agreement with the Florida Department of Education, participate in juvenile justice education quality assurance reviews, are subject to district reading plans, school improvement plans, have specific reading materials complementing those available through the educational program and encourage reading to the highest extent possible. The Gammons Foundation provided a \$3,000 Reading Improvement Grant this past year to Marion School District resulting in three students earning funding toward post-secondary education presented by the donors and Florida Juvenile Justice Education and Foundation Directors in a ceremony at the Marion Juvenile Residential Facility operated by Three Springs, Inc. Youth produced and shared a recording entitled, "I'm Sorry," in front of the entire student body and program staff. Youth were able to display their "large checks" to their respective community colleges within their rooms following the ceremony and are aware these funds are available to their education upon their release and admission to the school of their choice.

The Department of Juvenile Justice also surveys juvenile justice programs annually to assess program progress on areas unable to be captured by the DOE student data base and/or the Juvenile Justice Information System (JJIS). This year's response rate yielded a 70% response rate with the following results:

- 87% of the juvenile justice programs report that their students have access to the Internet.
- 76% of the programs are familiar with the Ready to Work certification program offered at no cost by the Florida Department of Education.
- 53% of the programs have had professional interactions with Public School Vocational Office, 43% with Regional Workforce Board, 42% with other work related organizations, and 9% with the Economic Development Association.
- 24% of the programs surveyed have applied for a Perkins Grant.
- 19% of the programs surveyed have students enrolled in the Florida Virtual School, for a total of 81 students with statewide self-reported participation of youth in non-DJJ programs reflecting a total of 125.
- 16% of the programs surveyed have services through Jobs for Florida's Graduates available in their circuit.
- 2% of the programs surveyed have youth in advanced placement (AP) academic classes for a total of 15 enrolled students.
- 1% has invited representatives from the Shared Youth Case Management Pilot Project to visit their program.
- During the 2007 calendar year a total of 703 youth earned a diploma or GED while being served in a juvenile justice education program
- During the 2007 calendar year 521 youth reported having a Florida ID or Drivers License and 213 students a State of Florida ID upon exiting a juvenile justice program.

## ***Career Protocols***

Florida's available labor pool must be educated, well trained and reflective of the state's diversity. Older adolescents involved with the Department of Juvenile Justice are often dependent upon the State to prepare for self sufficiency. Despite limited resources and, more significantly, staff availability, many individuals, boards and programs have developed programming to address this growing need. The Eckerd Family Foundation funded a study two years ago describing the need of employers, and the challenges present when educators and social workers assume the majority of the responsibility for ensuring job readiness among this population. The study is posted by DJJ at: <http://www.djj.state.fl.us/Education/careereducation.html>.

**Career and Technical Education** — The Florida Department of Education tracks student participation in career and technical education. The most recently available data from 2006 indicated that statewide, over 14,732 students were enrolled in career and technical education coursework within juvenile justice programs.

The Department of Juvenile Justice contributes to career development in several ways including supporting local partnerships, grants, training, community involvement, access to the Internet and technical assistance. The Department also has a statutory responsibility to designate each facility a level one, two or three as a descriptor referencing the degree of vocational involvement a program is able to offer students. On May 17, 2007, Rule 63B-1 was enacted addressing career related programs within the Department developed to define the responsibilities of the Department and contract providers relating to vocational and career programs. Department of Juvenile Justice Rule 63B-1 specifically addresses the requirement for all programs to incorporate a level of vocational training, the hiring of vocational staff by the department, youth assessment and participation in vocational activities, the cooperative agreement with the Department of Education and reporting requirements and assurances that students are provided with documentation essential to employability upon release. Such documents may consist of a school-generated identification card, social security card and/or driver's license. To view the rule in its entirety, please visit: <https://www.flrules.org/gateway/ChapterHome.asp?Chapter=63B-1>. This past year over 700 youth exited programs with some form of identification essential to employment during the previous year. This rule and measure was a direct result of a letter to the Office of Education from the Chair of the Circuit Board serving Sarasota County detailing the immediate benefit of adequate

documentation in local efforts to obtain employment for youth.

All programs must teach personal accountability skills and behaviors that are appropriate for youth in all age groups and ability levels and that lead to work habits that help maintain employment and living standards (s.985.3155, Florida Statutes). This is considered “Type One” and as of September 2008, was reported by 37 juvenile justice schools. Florida has 95 juvenile justice programs that include “Type One” content in addition to providing an orientation to the broad scope of career choices, based upon personal abilities, aptitudes, and interests. Programs are considered to be “Type Two” based upon the legislative premise that exploring and gaining knowledge of occupation options and the level of effort required to achieve them is an essential prerequisite to skill training. Additionally, twenty-five of Florida’s juvenile justice programs have achieved “Type Three,” which incorporates opportunities for students to demonstrate vocational competencies and prerequisites needed for entry into a specific occupation.

A variety of programs incorporate vocational offerings as part of the school day and are considered “Type Three” programs in the area of employability preparedness. A current list is located at [http://www.djj.state.fl.us/Education/education\\_status.html](http://www.djj.state.fl.us/Education/education_status.html).

The Department of Juvenile Justice has contributed to development of “Type Three” programs with contracts with Homebuilders Institute (HBI). Upon completion of those programs incorporating HBI, youth exit the program with academic credits leading towards graduation and industry-recognized, construction-related certifications. HBI also assists with job placement, transition, and follow-up. In the 2007-08 fiscal year, the Home Builders Institute - Project CRAFT vocational programs operated two community based programs and four residential programs. These programs were awarded 251 nationally recognized Pre-Apprenticeship Certificates. In addition, 226 or 90% of students receiving their certificate were placed in jobs, school or the military with an average wage of \$8.09 per hour. Project CRAFT students completed over 30,000 community service hours around the state to local nonprofit organizations and municipalities worth approximately \$196,500. In partnership with local school districts or private educational providers, eight students received their high school diploma. 60 students earned a GED and 1,032 high school credits were earned. For more information on HBI, please visit: <http://www.hbi.org/>.

The Department of Education has facilitated “Type Three” programs with annual awards of Carl D. Perkins grants submitted by responsible school districts. Until 2007, these grants were only available to residential commitment programs serving youth an average of nine months or longer. Consistent with the Department’s priorities of prevention, the DOE agreed to make these funds available to prevention and intervention programs effective 2007-08 which opened the door to the PACE Centers for Girls and Associated Marine Institutes juvenile justice education programs. Grant applications include the incorporation of the Ready to Work initiative as a pre-requisite and the Ready to Work program personnel have committed to assisting with developing employers in the students’ home communities that will recognize the certificates facilitating youth likelihood of employment upon release.

The Department of Education awarded \$450,000 in grants for the 2008-09 school year which included:

- Jackson County School District (Twin Oaks Juvenile Development/Graceville Vocational Youth Center) \$75,000
- Leon County Schools (PACE Centers for Girls, Inc., ) \$66,346
- Manatee School District (Palmetto Youth Academy) \$75,000
- Okaloosa County School District (Okaloosa Youth Development Center) \$53,660
- Okaloosa County School District (Santa Rosa County Milton Girls Juvenile Residential Facility) \$49,531
- Polk County School District (Avon Park Youth Center) \$55,463
- Polk County School District (PACE Centers for Girls, Inc.,) \$75,000

Last year four PACE centers partnered with their school districts as the recipients of Carl D. Perkins Grants to develop non-traditional career exploration programs. Perkins Grants served 295 girls in 2007-08 and will serve 208 girls in 2008-09. As a result of the Perkins Grant, PACE Jacksonville and PACE Broward initiated PACEWorks! which develops the independent living skills of girls 16 & 17 through integrated career and technical education, career assessment and coaching and job shadowing and

internships. Additionally, eight of the seventeen PACE Centers are certified Ready to Work (RTW) sites, three PACE Centers are in the process of becoming certified RTW and two Centers partner with certified RTW sites.

The Department of Education has also reached out to juvenile justice involved youth through the Jobs for Florida's Graduates (JFG) Program. On November 17, 2008 the Florida Endowment Foundation for Florida's Graduates honored the Jobs for Florida's Graduates program at the DOVE Academy as a stay-in-school program of excellence. Over 80% of the girls who took the GED and/or the FCAT passed last year and 100% of the girls who transitioned home last year were employed or enrolled in school full time. JFG students at the DOVE won the Corinthian College scholarship award at the Jobs for America's Graduates National Conference in 2006 and 2007.

Juvenile justice students were specifically named for inclusion in the Florida Ready to Work initiative funded by the Florida Department of Education. The teams of consultants have been working directly with juvenile justice programs throughout Florida. As of September 30, 2008, 76 juvenile justice programs were registered with 170 industry recognized certificates earned. Top-performing programs were:

- Stewart Marchman 44 credentials
- Okaloosa Youth Academy 21
- Collier Academy 20
- Nassau Juvenile Residential Facility 20
- Pensacola Boys Base 18

Post secondary options for the high school graduates in juvenile justice detention and residential commitment programs remain a continuous need. Florida has made a significant stride in serving these youth with funding from the Ready to Work program, implementation of the Shared Case Management Pilot project by Agency for Workforce Innovation and Workforce Florida, Inc. and by awarding the Youth Investment Grant from the Eckerd Family Foundation. The Department of Education is also exploring strategies to assist incarcerated youth unable to provide documents essential to establishing residency essential to in-state tuition requirements. Juvenile Justice Programs are encouraged to create "career centers" within their programs to maximize available resources to meet the transitional, post-secondary and employability preparation needs of older juvenile justice students.

The Secretary of the Florida Department of Juvenile Justice, Frank Peterman, Jr. is a member of the Board of Directors of Workforce Florida, Inc. The Deputy Secretary, Rod Love, represents the Department at their quarterly meetings and was present when the results of juvenile justice/workforce partnerships was presented May 15th at the statewide Workforce Florida Board of Directors consisting of panel presentations by Richard Williams, Terri Eggers, Donnie Read, and Charlotte Regional Workforce Board representative. Comprised of members of the Board of Directors, Workforce Florida has a council whose focus is developing policy and advancing programs that help Florida's youth enter and advance in the workforce through learning, training and earning opportunities. Most of this work is accomplished with federal funds provided to the state to assist youth with acquiring and building on skills that will lead to employment and career opportunities. The goals of the Youth Development Council include:

- Increasing the number of high school graduates.
- Increasing the number of youth who obtain a job that provides a living wage.
- Encouraging statewide employer/agency collaborations that help first-time workers enter and advance in the workplace.

Highlights of major state-level youth initiatives follow. Additionally, each of Florida's 24 Regional Workforce Boards commits funding to support skills development for youth. More information on Workforce Florida-led initiatives and youth training and employment resources are available through Regional Workforce Boards and information posted at <http://www.EmployFlorida.com>.

**Strengthening Youth Partnerships (SYP)** — Workforce Florida initiated SYP as a statewide effort in 2003 to increase coordination, planning and resource alignment among state organizations and agencies with complementary youth goals and missions. This group includes representatives from the departments of Juvenile Justice, Education, Children and Families, and Health along with Workforce Florida, the Agency for Workforce Innovation, Regional Workforce Boards, Associated Industries of Florida and the Able Trust Foundation. The Strengthening Youth Partnership meets regularly to identify gaps in services, potential program duplication, and strategies to improve services to Florida’s most at-risk youth. The partnership’s work is in line with more recent federal directives through the Employment and Training Administration (New Youth Vision) and the White House Task Force on Disadvantaged Youth (Shared Youth Vision), among others, aimed at fostering more collaboration among those supporting youth services. Key to the visions of both the state and federal partners is increasing training opportunities for young people in high-growth industries that pay higher wages. Florida’s record as an early innovator in building bridges among those serving youth contributed to its selection as one of 16 states in 2007 to receive a \$116,000 federal grant to fund two programs — WorkSource in the Jacksonville area and the Southwest Florida Workforce Board in Charlotte County — that link youthful juvenile offenders with educational, health and social services that support successful employment outcomes. The project is currently preparing a comprehensive website or tool kit linking to all statewide resources applicable to educating youth in continuing education, vocational training and/or employability.

**Project Connect (for Juvenile Offenders)** — With \$641,427 in funding from Workforce Florida, four Regional Workforce Boards serving 11 counties created local intervention programs aimed at reducing recidivism of youthful offenders by providing job-skill training, community service and transition assistance once the youth is returned home. A total of 292 offenders were enrolled with positive results — a recidivism rate of 14% compared to the 39% state average for youthful offenders. Additionally, of the 259 participants 110 received basic skills training; 189 received teen pregnancy prevention information; 101 received occupational skills training; 28 participated in community service; 16 in on-the-job training; 146 in leadership skills training; and 81 entered unsubsidized employment.

**Statewide Shared Case Management Pilot Project** – This new two-year project for juvenile offenders and youth in foster care began in July 2007. It encourages collaboration at the local level as exists at the state level through Strengthening Youth Partnerships. The pilot-project goal is to provide an improved network of services for juvenile offenders and foster-care youth in the communities where they live. Workforce Florida set aside \$250,000 as an incentive to Regional Workforce Boards to strengthen local ties and resources available to assist these young people. Distribution of the first \$150,000 to the top performing boards was pending as of October 31, 2008.

**Business and Employment Solutions and Training (BEST) Initiative** – This initiative was launched by Workforce Florida in 2005 to promote innovative local solutions for providing employment training in high-skill, high-wage industries for special populations including juvenile offenders, high school dropouts, other teens, people with disabilities and underemployed workers, among others. Through BEST, Workforce Florida provided about \$14.5 million to Regional Workforce Boards to train about 20,000 people in fields such as advanced manufacturing, health-care technicians and construction. Adults and youth are served through local training programs funded by this initiative. Youth programs are intended to advance the critical strategies outlined in the federal New Youth Vision: 1) Focus on alternative education; 2) Meet the demands of businesses, especially in high-growth industries; 3) Focus on the neediest, most at-risk youth, including out-of-school youth; and 4) Focus on improved performance.

**Developing Opportunity through Vocational Education (DOVE) for Juvenile Offenders** — This program represents a new level of cooperation between the workforce system and the Department of Juvenile Justice. Workforce Florida awarded a \$374,370 grant to a DJJ service provider to help cover the costs of skills training and industry-certifications for girls in a 48-bed, moderate-risk residential facility in Graceville. DOVE participants could select from one of four training fields — building construction technology, culinary operations, network support systems and landscape operations. Thirty-three girls either received or are currently receiving training through this project as of March 2008. The following benchmarks were achieved: 11 completed vocational training with eight receiving occupational certifications, and two earned their GED or high school diploma

(most referred to this facility already had earned their high school diploma or the equivalency).

**CHOICE Career Academies** — Workforce Florida is a committed champion and key partner in efforts to overhaul career education in Florida. Secondary schools are using this nationally recognized CHOICE model developed in Okaloosa County. Through CHOICE academies, students earn industry certifications from companies such as, Microsoft, Oracle, Cisco Systems and the National Center for Construction Education while simultaneously earning high school and college credits. These academies are designed to offer skills training in high-demand local industries, such as health, aerospace, energy, and information technology, and to prepare students who want to immediately enter the workforce with better-paying career options as well as those who choose to pursue college degrees. This training is provided at no additional costs to students or their parents. The student successes resulting from these academies are tremendous and they include young people who have previously struggled academically. Since 2005, Workforce Florida Inc., has awarded \$4.1 million to support the statewide expansion of CHOICE-model programs in 16 school districts. Another two-year, \$1 million grant was awarded to the Okaloosa County School District in 2006 to create the Employ Florida Banner Center for Career Academies. This Banner Center is charged with providing technical assistance to other districts seeking to launch CHOICE academies and creating statewide standards for career/vocational education. The continued expansion of CHOICE programs in Florida high schools was codified in state law in 2007 with the Florida Career and Professional Education Act, which, among other things, requires every Florida school district to create a CHOICE career academy by 2008. More information on CHOICE academies can be found at [www.choiceinstitutes.com](http://www.choiceinstitutes.com).

**Florida High School/High Tech** — This program is now serving juvenile justice involved youth in exceptional student education programs in the 1st, 4th, 11th, and 14th judicial circuits. The Department of Juvenile Justice Education Director is working on resource development to expand this national career service initiative and increase the number of high school graduates resulting from this intensified approach to engaging students in hands-on activities, case management, leadership and entrepreneurship.

## ***Collaboration Strategies***

The Office of Education participates in the DOE/DJJ Interagency Workgroup established by Section 1003.52(1)(d), Florida Statutes, prescribing the roles of program personnel and interdepartmental district, school board or provider collaboration strategies. In addition, the Office of Educational Services supports the department's strategic plan and Long Range Program Plan (LRPP) providing guidance and direction regarding the provision of educational and vocational policy, programming and services for youth in the care of DJJ and its providers. This office collaborates with all DJJ program offices, as well as with DOE, district school boards, program providers, other state and federal agencies, and interested and involved community stakeholders. Thus, this office connects DJJ program offices with local, state and federal entities (public and private) working cooperatively to provide educational and vocational services that turn around the lives of troubled youth.

As set forth in the Department's strategic plan, the following objectives have been implemented to enhance educational and vocational programs:

- Provide training and educational programs for youth in the juvenile justice system to help them in job acquisition and retention.
- Develop and implement programs that will identify individual needs of youth and provide programs to help them transition to the community and become successful adults.
- Eliminate barriers in multi-agency collaboration in the delivery of services for at-risk youth.

The DJJ Office of Education has represented state efforts at two national events this past year in addition to working throughout Florida. The Agency for Workforce Innovation sponsored the Education Director in the National Innovations Summit and the Office of Juvenile Justice Delinquency Programs invited and funded the Director's participation in development of a national toolkit designed to facilitate comprehensive community initiatives. The Department of Education included the DJJ Office of Education office in their 7th Annual K-12 Leadership Conference and the Director also serves on the quarterly State Advisory Group organized by the DOE as required by federal partners.

Education Office personnel also routinely work with statewide juvenile justice personnel, providers, the Department of Education, Florida Juvenile Justice Association, Advocacy Center for Persons with Disabilities, Jobs for Florida's Graduates, VSA arts of Florida, Homebuilder's Institute, Communities in Schools, Florida High School/High Tech, the Multi-agency Network for Students with Severe Emotional Disturbance (SEDNET), the Florida Diagnostic Learning Resources System (FDLRS), Florida Inclusion Network (FIN), the Transition Center/School-Based Enterprise/Transition to Independence and the Gammons Foundation. The Office of Education also participates on several workgroups designed to increase awareness of and invitations to external partners to invest in juvenile justice involved youth. These include the Agency for Workforce Innovation, Workforce Florida, Inc., Department of Children and Families and Agency for Persons with Disabilities. Florida has brought these and additional partners together serving on a "Strengthening Youth Partnership for a Shared Youth Vision," workgroup designed to improve education and employability outcomes for Florida's neediest youth. The Agency for Workforce Innovation (AWI) reported a 323.39% increase in the number of youth served by the regional workforce boards throughout Florida. Data received from regional workforce boards indicated over 525 juvenile justice involved youth were served by regional workforce boards throughout Florida with 109 youth successfully completing training, obtaining a job, enrolling in the military or job corps as a result of improved collaboration among local agencies. During 2006 only ten of the twenty-four regional workforce boards provided services to DJJ youth. This year, twenty-three out of twenty-four boards enrolled a youth on probation or in a juvenile justice self-contained educational program.

The DJJ and AWI also conducted a matching process of social security numbers (SSNs) as an additional method to ascertain baseline data reflecting the status of regional workforce board services to juvenile justice involved youth. Youth applying on-line or reluctant to report their involvement with DJJ would not be captured in the Shared Case Management Pilot Project. Results of this match indicated:

- Of the 65,536 youth SSNs provided by AWI, 5,631 were duplicated and subsequently dropped. Of the remaining 60,175 unduplicated youth SSNs, 1,861 matched to the SSNs on record for youth in DJJ's JJIS.
- Of the 1,816 DJJ youth matched to the AWI data, 52% are male and 48% are female.
- Approximately 59% of these youth are white, 39% are black, and 2% are classified as other races. Within this group of youth, 18% are classified as Hispanic and 82% are classified as Non-Hispanic.
- Reviewing the age at which youth were first referred, youths 12 years or younger accounted for 16% of initial referrals, youth 13 to 16 years of age accounted for 66% of initial referrals, and youth 17 years or older accounted for 18% of initial referrals.
- Reviewing the first offense of these youth, 69% committed a misdemeanor as their first offense, 29% committed a felony, and 2% committed some other infraction. The most frequent initial offense committed by youth was non-aggravated assault and/or battery (22%) and petit larceny (21%).
- Approximately 35% of these youth had no further referrals to DJJ, 14% had at least one subsequent referral, and 51% had two or more referrals to DJJ following their initial referral. (Note: Referrals may include alleged offenses occurring prior to dates of workforce board services).
- A significant percentage of these youth came from Circuits 7, 9, and 11 (35% together), and Circuits 3, 8, and 16 handling the least amount of youth (3.5% together)

In 2007, the Office of Education was invited to develop a grant for submission to the Eckerd Family Foundation (EFF). This grant was approved in August of 2008 with the Florida Juvenile Justice Foundation serving as fiscal agent. Involvement with child welfare and juvenile justice services is transient but all students are required to participate in education subject to state and federal mandates. The \$100,000 "With a Little Help From My Friends" grant lead to the "Youth Investment Award," with applications posted on the DJJ/Education and Florida Juvenile Justice Foundation (FJJF) website with the goals of improved

## EDUCATIONAL SERVICES

system, policy and staff development through individual student-centered investments and resulting successes to be reported and celebrated in terms other than recidivism. As the Office of Education works with students, families and educational/service providers throughout and beyond the state, connections continue to improve the quality of networking, service delivery and eventual outcomes. Short-term measures are in place within the programs and within the Youth Investment Award opportunity made available by the FJJF/EFF as well as increasing service delivery to juvenile justice involved youth by regional workforce boards.

The Office of Education serves on the Board of Directors for Communities in Schools (CIS), the nation's largest dropout prevention organization focused on helping kids stay in school and prepare for life by connecting community resources with the students and families that need them most. The Department is collaborating closely with Communities in School at the state level and four communities with shared prevention grant activities. CIS wants to ensure that youth have access to the "5 Basics" which include:

- A one on one relationship with a caring adult.
- A safe place to learn and grow.
- A healthy start and a healthy future.
- A marketable skill to use upon graduation.
- A chance to give back to their peers and the community.

The Florida Council on Crime and Delinquency Board of Directors has also partnered with DJJ for service on their board, a statewide organization consisting of thirty-three chapters with a focus on professional and resource development for criminal justice agencies and related community needs. The DJJ General Counsel, Education Director and staff development specialist regularly contribute to their statewide planning, training and volunteerism initiatives.

In response to national and state concerns, the Department of Children and Families developed a Human Trafficking Task Force which also includes participation from the DJJ Office of Education in an effort to maximize knowledge, skills, abilities and related resources to youth coming to the attention of the courts, law enforcement, juvenile justice and the child abuse registry in need of specialized international assistance.