

Educational Services

Florida Department of Juvenile Justice (DJJ) personnel work with the Department of Education (DOE), school districts, providers, Workforce Florida, Inc., regional work force boards, judicial and other personnel to improve educational outcomes for juvenile justice involved youth. This includes responding to student, family, teacher and district concerns, promoting collaborative partnerships, training and resource development and taking the initiative in areas such as recent establishment of vocational programs and scholarships for DJJ youth. In 2005, the Department's educational priorities included:

1. Increase the Reading Levels of Youth
2. Increase High School Graduation Rates
3. Increase Utilization of Technology in the Classroom
4. Increase Life Skill Training & Job Placement Rates
5. Increase Vocational Education Opportunities
6. Replace Deteriorating Portables and Classrooms

Key Facts

During the 2005-06 school year, 44,724 students were served in juvenile justice programs.

- ✓ 77% were male, 23% female;
- ✓ 72% enrolled in grades 8-10;
- ✓ 74% were overage for grade;
- ✓ 39% were served in exceptional student education programs (ESE); and,
- ✓ 96% of those taking the GED earned their High School Diploma*.

*Source: Florida Department of Education

Educational Priority 1: Increase the Reading Levels of Youth

The Florida DOE reports on the progress toward developing effective educational programs for juvenile delinquents pursuant to s.1003.52(19), Florida Statutes, implemented subsequent to the s.985.317(5), F.S. This statute mandated DOE to implement a common student assessment instrument and protocol for measuring student learning gains and student progression while a student is in a juvenile justice program. The Basic Achievement Skills Inventory (BASI) is now the standardized academic assessment providing pre- and post-testing of students in juvenile justice education programs.

Data should be available on academic gains for students enrolled during 2006-2007 in October, 2007 from the DOE.

Juvenile justice program students participate in the Florida Comprehensive Assessment Test (FCAT), which provides information about student proficiency in the Sunshine State Standards. During 2005-06, only three DJJ programs achieved Annual Yearly Progress based upon the length of stay and student ability to participate in two administrations of the FCAT test cycle. These included Columbus Residential Facility in Hillsborough County, PACE for Girls in Manatee County and the St. Johns County Juvenile Residential Program. While student mobility remains an issue within these programs,

data currently reflects increases in reading throughout the state. In 2006, 17% of students in DJJ programs were considered proficient, and 43% made learning gains in reading. Additionally, 21% were proficient in math, and 51% made learning gains according to the DOE.

DJJ compiles quarterly *Just Read, Florida Reports* encompassing activities within prevention, probation, detention and residential programs. Statewide, DJJ has worked with the community, school districts, and providers to establish media centers within all programs. A new standard specific to reading has been incorporated into the 2006 Juvenile Justice Quality Assurance Standards. DJJ also encourages recreational reading outside of the school program, use of volunteer mentors, community-based speakers, book drives and maintenance of on-site media centers.

During the third quarter of 2006, statewide activities promoting literacy with Florida's juvenile justice residential programs included 287 guest speakers, including authors, librarians, historians and storytellers. Over 7,000 books were donated to youth within the residential programs, and over 8,313 hours of professional development were provided to teachers, juvenile justice personnel, provider staff and/or volunteers according to quarterly reports submitted to residential program monitors. According to the 2005 DJJ Education Survey, the Florida Department of Juvenile Justice business partners provided mentors to 35% ($n=50$) of the 141 detention, residential, day treatment, and prevention programs that responded. Prevention programs had the highest proportion of programs in which Business Partners provided mentors to youth (73%).

Educational Priority 2: Increase High School Graduation Rates

While in a juvenile justice program, students have the opportunity to receive an education that focuses on their assessed educational needs, allowing them to progress toward obtaining high school diplomas or the equivalent. Approximately 900 high school diplomas were awarded to students in juvenile justice programs during 2005 according to the 2005 DJJ Education Survey. These include special, regular and Florida High School Diplomas awarded once a student passes the General Education Diploma Exam. Some of these youth were able to convert these diplomas to regular high school diplomas after meeting state requirements.

The DJJ collaborates with several partners to ensure training, resources, technical assistance and collaboration occurs at the state and local level. Programs have increased their career and technical education within juvenile justice education programs, which have typically received alternative and exceptional student education services. The Department is working with each judicial circuit to increase the number of satellite GED test sites. Currently, sixty-nine juvenile justice programs have been certified as satellite GED test sites allowing youth the privacy of the test administered in a secure environment. Three circuits are still awaiting approval of alternate test sites for youth in the custody of the Department to take the GED exam within their geographic area. A statewide listing of these sites is located on the DJJ website.

Leon Regional Juvenile Detention Center has a 100% passing rate of their students taking the GED with twenty-two graduates having participated during the last three school years. Okaloosa District Schools has had each of their juvenile justice education programs approved as a satellite GED Test Site by DOE. The Washington School Program at Dozier has a documented graduation rate of 85%. The Juvenile Justice Offender Center achieved 60%, which is the statewide average. Florida's Associated Marine Institutes reported over 500 high diplomas were earned among students participating in their day treatment programs during 2005. All juvenile justice programs are also required to offer the GED Exit option. The GED Exit option awards a regular high school diploma to students that pass the GED and the 10th grade FCAT. According to the 2005 DJJ Education Survey, at least one youth in 65% ($n=91$) of the 141 detention, residential, day treatment, and prevention programs that responded to the survey received a General Equivalency Diploma (GED). Day treatment programs had the highest proportion of programs in which at least one youth received a GED (86%). According to survey respondents, 819 youth received a GED in 2005.

Educational Priority 3: Increase Utilization of Technology in the Classroom

During the last year, juvenile justice schools have significantly increased utilization of technology, access to the internet, upgrading of hardware and software and opportunities for students to participate in the Florida Virtual High School and distance learning options. Character education and/or life skill training is provided to students along with training in Restorative Justice and Florida Works modular training, a three part basic employability and workplace readiness curriculum available at no cost from the DOE. Students at the Leon and Volusia Regional Juvenile Detention Center are able to access the Internet through wireless service and are therefore able to participate in the Choices Vocational Interest Inventory, A+ Reading Program and Florida Virtual High School.

On the Stewart-Marchman Center campus in Volusia County, four Compass Learning labs housed in three buildings provide a total of 100 student stations. These labs were installed through a cooperative agreement between Volusia County Schools and the Stewart-Marchman Center. Funding for these labs included a DOE Education Partnership grant, District technology funds, capital outlay funds, Perkins Grant funds, Workforce Development funds and Stewart-Marchman Center funding.

The 2005 DJJ Education Survey asked the programs to report if they had access to the internet or to an intranet (internal network). Of the 106 programs to respond to the survey, 80% of the programs reported to access to the internet ($n=85$) and 63% of the programs reported access to the intranet ($n=67$). A higher proportion of the detention programs ($n=14$, 67%) and the residential programs ($n=71$, 84%) had access to the internet in comparison to the 62% detention programs ($n=13$) and 64% residential programs ($n=54$) that had access to the intranet. Additionally, a higher proportion of residential

programs had access to the internet and intranet in comparison to detention programs. Since this survey, additional programs have increased their technological capacity and with the addition of new concrete modulars and establishment of new computer labs.

Educational Priority 4: Increase Life Skills Training and Job Placement Rates

All facilities provide life skills consistent with workplace readiness educational services described as “Level One” in §985.622 F.S., and the state’s multi-agency career and technical education plan. These include communication skills, interpersonal skills, and decision-making skills and lifelong learning skills.

According to the 2005 Florida Department of Juvenile Justice Education Survey, 21% of the 141 programs that responded to the survey had at least one youth connected with a One Stop Career Center ($n=29$), and 28% connected with other employment services ($n=40$) during 2005. Day treatment programs ($n=14$) had the highest proportion of programs in which at least one youth connected with other employment services ($n=10$, 71%). Programs were more likely to have at least one youth connected with other employment services (28%) than connected with a local One Stop Career Center (21%).

The survey also specifically asked about social and life skills trainings associated with goal setting, communication skills, conflict resolution, dealing with emotions, responsibility, decision making, problem solving, appearance and hygiene, health and nutrition, character education, attitude training, spirituality service, anger management, values clarification, self-esteem, peer pressure, stress management, substance abuse, self image, balancing a checkbook, and budgeting. Overall, the majority of the programs offered each of the identified types of trainings. Spirituality service was the training offered by the smallest proportion (84%) of programs.

The DJJ supports parent education, particularly for students in programs that have children or are expecting. Through a partnership with adult education resources, a research-based parenting booklet was developed at a fourth-grade reading level incorporating lessons for youth based upon the ten parenting behaviors most closely correlated with incidents of abuse and neglect. Over 2000 youth at the Bay Regional Juvenile Detention Center have received training in the one hour curriculum, which includes a colorful booklet, instructor's guide and pre- and post-test. Eighty-seven percent of youth indicated a minimum of 80% on their post-test.

The Faith and Community Based Delinquency Treatment Initiative (FCBDTI) is implementing the Departments’ “Character Education and Moral Development Curriculum,” within Britt Halfway House in Pinellas County, San Antonio Boys Village in Pasco County, First Step Adolescent Girls in Orange County, Orange Intensive Halfway House in Orange County, and Broward Intensive Halfway House in

Broward County. The curriculum is a non-partisan, non-sectarian character education framework that teaches the Seven Pillars of Character: Trustworthiness, Respect, Responsibility, Fairness, Caring, Faith and Citizenship at seven sites in Florida. The curriculum is designed for the juvenile justice population with examples and role-plays that are applicable to the struggles delinquent youth are faced with each and every day. Decision-making skills are taught and common thinking errors are discussed. The Character treatment chosen for the FCBDTI program was selected, not only because of its effectiveness, but because it is supported by research and has the built-in capacity to monitor the quality of implementation over time.

Educational Priority 5: Increase Vocational Education Opportunities

Over \$500,000 in career training funds were made available to youth in DJJ residential programs during the 2006-07 school year. Perkins Grants were awarded to programs in Liberty, Madison, Union, Citrus and West Palm Beach school districts. The Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention (OJJDP) also approved grant funding to DJJ which included a school safety component approved by the State Advisory Board to DJJ for a project which included \$80,000 in funding dedicated to post-secondary education to committed high school graduates.

The Department of Juvenile Justice has improved educational, vocational and post-secondary education training options available to students throughout Florida. All juvenile justice education programs are required to administer vocational interest inventories. The DOE also provides “Choices” career education software to all facilities and provides related training. They all have access to “Florida Works” curriculum, available through www.Floridatechnet.org. Residential program quality assurance standards include an indicator specific to employability, career, technical curriculum and instruction. This past year, the DJJ opened the first girls vocational program in the state with matching funds from Workforce Florida, Inc. converted Graceville Academy, an optional post-probation services program to a ‘magnet school’ commitment program providing additional education options for youth committed to the DJJ having earned their high school diploma, and established the Bill Bankhead Scholarship and the Juvenile Justice Foundation, currently partnering with Tallahassee Community College as a model for potential statewide replication.

While statutes require students to be enrolled in coursework leading to a high school diploma, several facilities have creatively integrated career training into the academic program in addition to partnerships providing for youth community service and work experience. The Department is committed to ensuring that every juvenile justice program participate in at least the first level of workforce readiness, consistent with basic employability skills, such as communication, demonstrating adequate interpersonal skills, decision-making skills, and exposure to lifelong learning skills. Career and technical education is in place at prevention programs, such as the Youth Challenge Academy in Clay County and PACE

Programs for Girls. Probation and Community Corrections provides career awareness and vocational education at Associated Marine Institute programs throughout the state, recently made available as a low-risk or Level II commitment program. Florida's 26 regional detention centers also provide youth with "soft skill" development in addition to recruiting volunteers, hosting career days, using newspapers and *Dare to Dream* transition resource books provided by DOE.

Students are not all able to participate in a vocational education class due to individual academic requirements and limited elective options, which may include personal and social skills, physical education or technology coursework. Type 1 and 2 skills, however, may be incorporated within personal and social skills coursework and behavioral programming, such as Conflict Resolution Skills, the use of CHOICES software available from the DOE, other interests and aptitude surveys and/or work specific to documenting personal accomplishments and qualifications, work preparation and job seeking and/or coping with stress.

Florida was recently selected as one of 16 states to participate in federally funded training specific to collaboration on workforce efforts for youth in disadvantaged situations as a result of the "Strengthening Youth Partnership Initiative" facilitated by Workforce Florida, Inc. The Department of Education and DJJ also annually review the multi-agency career education plan for juvenile justice involved students.

Careers in the arts are supported through a partnership between DJJ and VSA arts of Florida. The Art in Detention Project, initiated as a result of this partnership in 2001, was recognized in a special report commissioned by Senator Victor Crist and reported in a Florida Senate Project Report titled "Reviewing Effectiveness of Juvenile Programs That Use a Visual and Performing Arts-Based Intervention Approach." Twenty juvenile justice programs were awarded *Artists in Residence* grants from VSA arts of Florida in partnership with the Florida Education Foundation this year.

The Department of Juvenile Justice, Workforce Florida Inc. and the Agency for Workforce Innovation developed and implemented 'Project Connect' to connect agencies and organizations in a community to help juvenile offenders to become "connected" members of society. Workforce Florida Inc. awarded four Project Connect grants to juvenile justice programs in Florida. This partnership led to the development of the Twin Oaks Career Development Model which partners with the Chipola Regional Workforce Board, Washington-Holmes Technical Center and community business partners to provide employability skills training, occupational completion points toward trade certification and youth employment opportunities. In an effort to enhance the effectiveness of the model, grant funding was awarded by the Florida Department of Education, which led to the development and validation of an Exit Transition checklist and the basis for the 2005 survey implemented by DJJ.

The Able Trust awarded a Florida High School/High Tech program site to the Workforce Development Board of Okaloosa and Walton Counties. The site will be the Okaloosa Youth Academy, a moderate risk juvenile justice facility located in Crestview, Florida. The program provides transitional services to motivate and prepare high school students with disabilities for college, careers and to ultimately become self-sufficient and a contributing member of society. A local High School/High Tech Site Coordinator provides services and activities, including preparatory experience, work-based experience, youth development and leadership and connecting activities. The program has been so successful that an additional model is in the process of development in Miami-Dade County in partnership with Baypoint Academy.

The Justice Research Center is completing a cost-study of vocational juvenile justice education services provided in the Avon Park and StreeSMART programs. These services were initially implemented with federal funding, local funding from the School Board of Polk County, DJJ funding, and an overlay service contract with Homebuilders, Inc. The cost assessment is being completed to provide legislators and stakeholders with information regarding the expense of implementing best-practice initiatives such as evidence-based, vocational programming within juvenile justice facilities.

DJJ program directors throughout the state received training during October 2006 in local and statewide resources, such as one stop centers, regional workforce board initiatives, Workforce Florida, Inc., Perkins grants and the pending Ready to Work initiative approved by the Florida Legislature. Success 4 Kids & Families, a non-profit organization in Hillsborough County is conducting research into juvenile justice involved students that drop out of school, efforts to re-engage them into career training and completing a statewide needs assessment in addition to the piloting of post-secondary education options for high school graduates committed to residential DJJ programs. As public school funding is no longer available to these students, partnerships on behalf of these young people is essential to productive programming pending their return to the community.

During FY 2002-03, 13,521 DJJ students were enrolled in community college and vocational courses. In FY 2003-04 the number increased to 14,743. During 2004-05, the total reported was 13,962. According to the 2005 DJJ Education Survey, at least one youth received community college credit in 15% ($n=21$) of the 141 detention, residential, day treatment, and prevention programs that responded to the survey (Table 3). Prevention programs had the highest proportion of programs in which at least one youth received community college credit (27%). The survey respondents reported that 78 youth received community college credit during 2005. According to the 2004 DJJ Education Survey of residential and detention programs ($n=106$), 67 programs (63%), including 5 detention programs and 62 residential programs, offered vocational programs (Table 1). Five of the 21 detention programs (24%) that replied to the survey offered vocational programs. Residential programs reported a higher

proportion with 73% of programs offering vocational programs. Additionally, the programs were asked to report if their vocational programs were tied to private businesses. Of the 106 programs to respond to the survey, 17% of programs reported that their vocational programs were tied to private businesses ($n=18$).

According to the 2005 DJJ Education Survey, 20% of the 141 programs that provided a response to the survey had at least one youth receive vocational training certifications ($n=28$), 8% had at least one youth receive trade certification ($n=11$), and 43% in which at least one youth was connected with other vocational opportunities ($n=60$) (Table 3). Day Treatment ($n=12$) had the largest proportion of programs in which youth received vocational training certifications ($n=4$, 29%) or in which youth were connected with other vocational opportunities (86%). Programs were most likely to connect at least one youth with vocational opportunities.

In addition to education topics, the 2005 Florida Department of Juvenile Justice Education Survey inquired into documents deemed essential for workplace readiness. These specifically included a driver's license, a state of Florida issued identification card, a birth certificate, a social security card, a checking account, a savings account. These items are invaluable to youth as they transition back into society from a residential program or off of supervision. Of the 141 programs that responded to the survey, at least one youth in 23% of the programs had a driver's license at release from a residential facility or supervision ($n=33$), 33% of the programs had at least one youth with a State of Florida identification card at release ($n=47$), 32% of programs had at least one youth with a birth certificate at release ($n=45$), and at least one youth in 31% of the programs had a social security card at release ($n=44$). In addition, at least one youth in 12% of the programs had a checking account at release ($n=17$), and 9% of the programs had at least one youth with a savings account at release ($n=13$). A higher proportion of day treatment programs released at least one youth with a State of Florida Id card (86%), a birth certificate (79%), a social security card (93%), a checking account (36%), or a savings account (29%).

It is anticipated that statewide policy and program development will follow to ensure youth have essential documentation upon return to the community, particularly when unavailable from family members or school districts.

Educational Priority 6: Replace Deteriorating Classroom Portables

The Florida Legislature awarded funding essential to improving the learning environment during the 2006 Legislative Session. Four school districts were provided with new classroom space as a result of this allocation. Current statutes prescribe that "school districts shall not be charged any rent, maintenance or utilities or overhead on DJJ facilities. Maintenance, repairs and remodeling of existing

facilities shall be provided by the Department of Juvenile Justice pursuant to s.1003.52(16), F.S.” Due to ineligibility of DJJ for PECO funds, available to public schools for capital outlay, developing, maintaining and improving juvenile justice learning environments remains challenging. Many school districts have invested the funds essential to retrofitting state-owned facilities in order to provide access to Florida Virtual High School. Some providers are in facilities formerly operated as county jails and/or correctional institutes. Some providers have built their own facilities as a major investment in providing appropriate school buildings although their state and/or school district contracts are time-limited.

Factors Unique to Juvenile Justice Schools in Florida

Juvenile justice programs are located within districts as a result of legislative determination and/or the procurement process. Many students within the programs come from outside the school district or have not been attending school regularly prior to placement in a detention or commitment program. The current structure provides for state or contracted juvenile justice programs as well as public school employees or contracted educational personnel. The majority of school districts provide support above and beyond what is required to these programs despite the challenges of operating small schools with little to no control over the student population and for many, rural locations. Because students in these programs are not eligible for school choice and often distant from family members, additional safeguards are provided by DJJ monitoring, a quality assurance process mandated by the DJJ and the DOE, and in many programs, employees working for more than one employer co-located within the program.

Students in these small schools have diverse academic levels and behavioral issues and were included within dropout prevention programs prior to 2001. Since the elimination of applicability of Florida’s former Youth Services Rule and the development of statutory language specific to juvenile justice education programs, the Florida legislature has included a ‘hold harmless’ provision to insure the supplemental funding is essential to programs. A fiscal impact study implemented in 2001 documented the need for increased allocations for juvenile justice education programs. During the last eight years, the additional funds resulting from the “hold harmless” provision and a formula including discretionary supplemental academic funds available to the districts has provided for an increasingly reduced allocation while teacher and student costs have risen. In addition, the small number of teachers within schools serving twenty to two hundred students make subject-specific teacher certification a challenge as programs work to provide for continuity of education for all students moving in and out of juvenile justice programs. A fifty-bed detention center, for example, may have in excess of 250 student enrollments or withdrawals in one month.

The majority of programs are funded by the school district in which the facility is located but there are exceptions. For example, Washington County Schools provides educational programs and services to residential programs in Jackson and Okeechobee Counties as a result of the “Bobby M” lawsuit

settlement. This settlement not only reduced student populations at these facilities, it also provided funding for the development of vocational programs at the Dozier School for Boys, which have youth at the ‘deep end of the continuum’ for the longest period of time. Each student served by the Eckerd Youth Wilderness Program is enrolled in Pinellas County Schools as a result of a longstanding partnership between the program and school district with the exception of the Eckerd program in Washington county.

The Okaloosa School District is serving the juvenile justice female student population in Milton Schools for Girls based upon a mutual agreement between Okaloosa and Santa Rosa Counties. A listing of all juvenile justice programs alphabetized by responsible school district, also noting the level of vocational education and whether or not it has been approved by the Department of Education (DOE) as a GED test site, is available on the DJJ website under the Office of Educational Development (<http://www.djj.state.fl.us/Education/index.html>).

The addition of an education office and component to the DJJ website provides updated information specific to educational training, resources and opportunities.