

FLORIDA DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION



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Dr. Eric J. Smith
Commissioner of Education



July 13, 2010

Commissioner Eric J. Smith
Florida Department of Education
325 West Gaines Street, Suite 1514
Tallahassee, Florida 32399-0400

Dear Commissioner Smith:

In accordance with Section 20.055(5)(h), Florida Statutes, I am submitting the six month follow-up response concerning the Office of Program Policy Analysis and Government Accountability (OPPAGA) report number 10-07, *Youth Entering the State's Juvenile Justice Programs Have Substantial Educational Deficits; Available Data is Insufficient to Assess Learning Gains on Students* for your information.

If you have any questions, please contact me at 245-9418.

Sincerely,

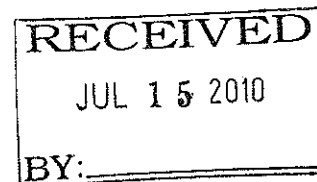
Ed W. Jordan

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enclosure

c: OPPAGA

Florida Joint Legislative Auditing Committee



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MEMORANDUM

TO: Mr. Ed Jordan

FROM: Dr. Frances Haithcock *FH*

DATE: July 12, 2010

SUBJECT: OPPAGA Audit #10-07

The Office of Program Policy Analysis and Government Accountability report on *Youth Entering the State's Juvenile Justice Programs Have Substantial Educational Deficits; Available Data Is Insufficient to Assess Learning Gains on Students* included the Department of Education's (Department) response to the recommendations in the report. Please find below an update on actions taken as a result of the recommendations from the report.

Recommendation 1: To improve data quality, we recommend that the Department work directly with information systems personnel in each school district to ensure that district data systems capture the data the Department needs to calculate juvenile justice student learning gains. The Department should assess the adequacy of the district's data systems to collect and report these data, and provide training and assistance to district and program staff as needed to help them automate the data collection process. The Department should also review the data submitted by districts and use other Department data sources to identify and address in a timely manner any problems with the data being reported.

The Bureau of Education Information and Accountability Services and the Bureau of Exceptional Education and Students Services have reviewed the 2008-09 Basic Achievement Skills Inventory (BASI) data submitted by districts. These Bureaus have worked directly with information system personnel in each school district to ensure that their systems are programmed to capture the required data and to increase the reliability and validity of data submitted. The Department identified Department of Juvenile Justice (DJJ) education programs with BASI data reporting errors, contacted 20 districts/DJJ education programs, informed them of the data reporting errors, and advised them to correct the errors and update the data prior to February 28, 2010. Twelve out of the 20 districts/DJJ education programs that were contacted corrected their data. Training was provided in the spring of 2010 to new BASI contacts and to

DR. FRANCES HAITHCOCK
CHANCELLOR OF PUBLIC SCHOOLS

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district MIS staff at the annual database conference. A Technical Assistance Paper is under development to review common data reporting errors and highlight correct reporting.

Recommendation 2: To ensure that the Department reports reliable information about learning gains of students in juvenile justice facilities, we recommend that the Department assign responsibility for evaluating the completeness of the data and student learning gains to its Division of Accountability, Research, and Measurement.

The Department continues to assign responsibility to both the Division of Public Schools and the Division of Accountability, Research, and Measurement, which ensures that school district information systems personnel and program personnel receive consistent information, guidance, and assistance from the Department.

Recommendation 4: We also recommend that the Department of Education consider the reliability and usefulness of the BASI test results in determining whether to renew its contract with the test manufacturer in the fall of 2010.

The DJJ common assessment is selected through a formal procurement process conducted by the Department. A common assessment Request for Proposal (RFP) has been completed and is being routed through the Department for review and approval.

Recommendation 5: In addition, we recommend that the Legislature amend s.1003.52(3)(b), Florida Statutes, to require that the Department of Education make annual status reports to the Legislature on the learning gains of students in juvenile justice facilities and to detail the steps it has taken to ensure the completeness and reliability of juvenile justice student performance data.

S. 1003.52 (3)(b), Florida Statutes, was not amended during the 2010 legislative session to include the above recommendation. The Department currently provides an annual report to the Legislature that includes information about the performance on the FCAT. In its next report, due February 2011, the Department intends to include information from the BASI.

If you have questions or need additional information, please contact Karen Denbroeder by phone at 245-0475 or via e-mail at karen.denbroeder@fldoe.org.

FH/kd

cc: Mary Jane Tappen
Bambi Lockman
Karen Denbroeder
Jeff Sellers
Kris Ellington
Ruth Jones