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June 29, 2007

Contact Information:
Cheryl L. Sattler
(850) 245-0414
cheryl.sattler@fldoe.org
K12: 2007- 117

MEMORANDUM

TO: District Superintendents

FROM: Cheri Pierson Yecke, Chancellor

SUBJECT: Department of Juvenile Justice (DJJ) Issues:

- Title I, Part A
- Highly Qualified Teachers

Florida's Legislature has identified education as the single most important factor in the rehabilitation of adjudicated delinquent youth. Consistent with Section 1003.52, Florida Statutes, the Legislature is committed to ensuring that youth in the juvenile justice system continue to be provided a high quality education. The Department of Education is also committed to this endeavor and serves as the lead agency for juvenile justice education programs, curriculum, support services, and resources.

As you know, juvenile delinquency institutions and programs are public schools and are held to the same standards as other schools. This includes, but is not limited to, teaching the Sunshine State Standards, administering the FCAT, and meeting all accountability requirements.

Title I, Part A

Earlier this year, you were informed that these institutions must receive Title I, Part A, funds using the same formula that is used for all public schools. Districts must allocate Title I, Part A, funds to these institutions if either of the following two conditions are met:

CHERI PIERSON YECKE, PH.D.
CHANCELLOR, K-12 PUBLIC SCHOOLS

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1. The facility has more than 75 percent of its student population eligible for Free & Reduced-Price Lunch, using FDOE calculations; or
2. The facility's poverty level is such that, were it a traditional public school, it would receive funds under Title I, Part A.

Currently, Florida has four such juvenile delinquency institutions with total student population of 168. These institutions are eligible for, and must receive, Title I, Part A, funds. In addition, as you file your application for funds under No Child Left Behind, you must allocate funds to any facility within your district that –using your district-determined allocations process – are eligible to receive these funds.

Highly Qualified Teachers

As you know, the students who are placed in Florida's juvenile justice programs are among our most academically vulnerable young people. As such, they are in need of high quality, fully credentialed teachers. Florida law requires the following, regardless of whether or not the teachers are employees of a school district. Section 1012.2315 (2), Florida Statutes, states: "School districts may not assign a higher percentage than the school district average of first-time teachers, temporarily certified teachers, teachers in need of improvement, or out-of-field teachers to schools with above the school district average of minority and economically disadvantaged students...." Our juvenile justice facilities meet this standard. However, while meeting this requirement may be challenging, Section 1012.2315 (3), Florida Statutes, gives districts the flexibility to provide incentive pay for teachers in these hard-to-staff schools.

I know that you are committed to providing the very best education possible to all Floridians, and especially to the students most in need. Thank you for ensuring that our juvenile justice facilities are appropriately funded and that our students are taught by highly qualified teachers.

CPY/iwc

cc: High School Principals
Department of Juvenile Justice Providers
Title I Directors