



## Press Release

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Janice Gilbert, the special education teacher at the Sumter Youth Development Campus (YDC) in Americus, has been selected as the Department of Juvenile Justice Teacher of the Year for the 2010-2011 school year.

Gilbert received the honor during DJJ's annual Education Professional Development Workshops, on Monday, February 8, at the Georgia Public Safety Training Center in Forsyth. Gilbert's term as Teacher of the Year will begin on July 1, 2010.

Gilbert has worked at the Sumter YDC for 3 years. She has been a teacher for 25 years, spending most of her career as a special education teacher and assistant principal in the Randolph County School System. Gilbert said she was "shocked and honored," by the award.

"I was just recognized for doing my job and doing what I love every day," she said.

Gilbert said she found teaching in a juvenile facility was not all that different than teaching in any other public school system. She said the key to reaching young people is to show them that you care about them.

"You can open kids up to the world of education by showing them that you're there for them," she said.

Department of Juvenile Justice Commissioner Albert Murray said education is among the most valuable services DJJ provides to youth in our care, and that teachers are key to the agency's success.

"People like Ms. Gilbert and her colleagues are essential to the department accomplishing its goals," Murray said.

Being named DJJ's Teacher of the Year makes Gilbert eligible to be named Georgia's Teacher of the Year. The Georgia Teacher of the Year Award will be announced by the Georgia Department of Education this May.

Gilbert follows outgoing 2009-2010 DJJ Teacher of the Year Betsy Stone, a special education teacher from the Aaron Cohn Regional Youth Detention Center (RYDC).

The Georgia Department of Juvenile Justice is Georgia's 181st school district and has accreditation from the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools. All DJJ teachers are certified. Students in short-term RYDCs and long-term YDCs both receive 330 minutes of instruction each day year round. Students in DJJ schools can achieve a GED, high school diploma or special education diploma. All academic and vocational credits awarded are transferable with the youth upon a return to the community.

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