

**Board of Juvenile Justice
Thursday, October 25, 2007
11:00 a.m.**

**DJJ Central Office
3408 Covington Highway
2nd Floor – Board Room
Decatur, Georgia 30032**

Opening Remarks

J. Daniel Shuman, Chair

Mr. Shuman called to order the October 25, 2007 meeting of the Board of Juvenile Justice and DJJ Board of Education. He noted the time as 11:00 a.m. He asked that all attendees stand and state their name and organization affiliation. Afterwards, Board member Van Herrin gave the invocation.

DJJ Staff Present: Albert Murray, Commissioner; Spiro Amburn; Nathan Cain; Dr. Jack Catrett; David Duncan; Gordon Fisher; James Frazier; Loronda Giddens, Cobb ISP; Steve Hayes; Steve Herndon; Amy Howell; Jeff Minor; Dr. Tom O'Rourke; Martha Patton; Mattie Robinson; Rob Rosenbloom; Coy Satterfield; Jimmy Taylor; Lena Wilson

Others: Todd White, Attorney General's Office; April Morgan, Nelson Mullins; Richard Williams, Student/Former DJJ Resident; Anne Rogers, Barton Clinic; Mrs. Eva Lou Shuman

Roll Call

Lena Wilson then called the roll.

Board Members Present: Larry Barnes; Michael Baugh; Bruce Garraway; Van Herrin; Elizabeth Lindsey; Perry McGuire; Judy Mecum; Daniel Menefee; Pastor Dexter Rowland; J. Daniel Shuman; Sandra Taylor

Advisory Board Members Present: Judge Quintress Gilbert

Noting the presence of a quorum of the Board, Chairman Shuman asked for a motion to approve the minutes from the September 27, 2007 meeting of the Board of Juvenile Justice. Mr. Daniel Menefee moved to approve the minutes from the September 27, 2007 meeting of the Board of Juvenile Justice. Mr. Larry Barnes seconded the motion and hearing no questions or comments, the motion was carried.

Commissioner's Comments

Albert Murray, Commissioner

Commissioner Murray greeted everyone and welcomed them back to DJJ Central Office. Before giving his report, he acknowledged the presence of Mr. Perry McGuire, a new appointee to the Board of Juvenile Justice. He thanked Mr. McGuire for being able to take part in the photo session at the previous meeting even though he was not able to remain to participate. He stated that he shared some background information on Mr. McGuire to the Board at the last meeting but he provided the information again for the benefit of those who were not present. Along with this information, Commissioner Murray stated that Mr. McGuire is also a former State Senator which the agency will benefit from as we utilize his experience working in that area with legislators on our legislative initiatives, budget processes, and other matters.

Commissioner Murray informed the Board that Ms. Elaine P. Snow is the most recent appointee to the Board. He explained that this appointment occurred after the September meeting and Ms. Snow could not attend today due to previous obligations.

Sharing some background information, he stated that Ms. Snow is from Lindale representing the Board from the (11th) Eleventh Congressional District. Ms. Snow is a bureau major for the City of Rome Police Department. She is the first female president of the Georgia Chapter F.B.I. National Academy Associates and founder and president of the Georgia Association of Terminal Agency Coordinators. Ms. Snow serves on the Northwest Georgia Police Academy Advisory Board, Georgia Crime Information Center Advisory Board, and is the Georgia representative to the Criminal Justice Information Services Southern Working Group. Ms. Snow earned a bachelor's degree from Jacksonville State University and a master's degree from Columbus State University. She and her husband, Tommy, have two grown children and four grandchildren. Commissioner Murray stated that this is another excellent addition to our board and we look forward to meeting her at the next meeting in December.

Continuing, he stated that we now have just one regular board vacancy and that is from the 8th Congressional District. He stated that it is nice to have a nearly full complement of Board members and it would be good to reach a point when we will have all of our Board seats filled.

Regarding our next meeting, it has been our practice and our tradition to combine the November and December meetings; however, last year we were off schedule. The next meeting is scheduled for December 13th at 11 a.m. at central office.

Division of Operations

Commissioner Murray stated that the big issue in the Operations Division this time of year is population management, although it is a concern year round. The Operations Division has managed very well the increase in our detention population this past month

through proven strategies and good communications with juvenile courts around the state. Our statewide numbers have been over capacity consistently for the past several weeks and individual centers are at or near 120%. Since DJJ does not control the front door to our system, we must in our supporting role help guide intake decisions where and when we can. Part of that process is using a written objective risk assessment tool called the detention assessment instrument (DAI). This tool rates youth as low, medium or high risk to commit new offenses while awaiting court or failing to attend the scheduled court date. While there are mitigating circumstances that are used by juvenile courts to override the rating, our efforts are around providing alternatives to use of a secure detention bed for low and medium risk youth and reserving the beds for the higher risk youth. We have a limited resource (number of beds) and must prioritize their use especially when we are crowded. A recent look at the statewide data over the last five months shows our beds were occupied by 25% low risk youth, 25% medium risk youth and 45% high risk youth. At the time of this survey, five percent of the youth had not had an assessment. He indicated that there is room within our detention centers if we can impact the placement of lower level youth.

Division of Programs

Campus Operations

- Campus Operations is pleased to announce the promotion of Jackie Kelsey to Director of Classification and Transportation Services. Jackie began her career in 1981 with the Department of Corrections. She came to DJJ in 2006 as the Assistant Office Director of the Office of Classification and Transportation Services. She is a 1979 graduate of Tuskegee University.
- Latera Davis, Program Coordinator for Campus Operations, has kicked off a community service volunteer partnership with Hands on Atlanta. Hands on Atlanta is a non-profit organization that helps individuals, families and community groups find flexible volunteer opportunities at more than 500 service organizations and schools. Hands on Atlanta is an affiliate of the Hands On Network, an association of “Cares” and “Hands on” organizations across the United States, the U.K. and other countries. The youth at Macon YDC participated in an Orientation session for the Hands on Atlanta Project on October 17th.
- Graduation ceremonies were held on September 7th at the Sumter YDC. Fifteen youth received their GED diplomas, three received high school diplomas and three received certificates of program completion from South Georgia Technical College. As was noted last month, DJJ Board Vice Chairman Dr. Ed Risler was the keynote speaker. Dr. Tom O’Rourke, Associate Superintendent and Mr. Daniel Menefee, DJJ Board Secretary was also in attendance.

Office of Behavioral Health Services

- Dr. Janice Shieh has been selected to receive the Friend of Children Award which will be presented to her at the 8th Annual Child Placement Conference on October 30th at the Augusta Marriott. Dr. Sheih is the Clinical Director at the Augusta YDC and is responsible for the care we provide to DJJ males with the most serious mental health needs.
- The Office of Behavioral Health Services' Annual Conference is underway, being held October 24-26, 2007 at St. Simon's Island. This year's conference is titled "Conquering the Summit," and will provide continued clinical training that supports the OBHS Treatment Pathways and Treatment Program. Sessions will not only focus on the theory of the treatment program but will provide very practical hands on experience to enhance skills and application.
- Rick Harrison, Director of OBHS participated in the 2007 Joseph E. Lowery Institute for Justice and Human Rights at Clark Atlanta University on October 12, 2007. This year's symposium was titled "Reclaiming Our Youth: No Throw-Away-Kids."

Office of Medical Services

- The Office of Medical Services has partnered with the Office of Behavioral Health to submit a multistate grant application to include substance abuse services to DJJ youth. The grant application is a collaborative effort through the Emory University Rollins School of Public Health. Other partners include the Georgia Department of Corrections, Fulton and DeKalb County Jails and the Georgia Department of Human Resources.
- Dr. Michelle Staples-Horne, DJJ Medical Director, presented at the Georgia Chapter of the American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP) - Fall Continuing Education Conference on the health needs of DJJ youth. The AAP continues to advocate for health care services to our population.

Legislative Services

Commissioner Murray stated that several important events and meetings have been held lately involving members of the General Assembly, as noted below:

- A summit on Juvenile Justice was held on September 28th at the Marietta Conference Center. This summit, entitled "Mapping the Future: Building Consensus for Juvenile Justice in Georgia," focused on current trends and issues facing the Juvenile Justice system. Various stakeholders, including the Governor's office, legislators, DJJ, CYCC, judges, prosecutors and advocates, were represented. Commissioner Murray took part in one panel discussion and Rob Rosenbloom presented on trends and

challenges facing the state juvenile justice system. Commissioner Murray gave a special thanks to board member James Kelly who attended the conference. He added that DJJ had several key staff who attended and that they were all pleased with the legislative turnout which included 14 legislators. Governor Perdue endorsed the conference and, although he could not attend, he provided a welcome letter which was read by former board member and new child advocate, Tom Rawlings. The letter outlines several principles which illustrate the Governor's vision for the juvenile justice system. A copy of the letter was provided for the board. A core group of stakeholders are continuing to meet to determine and proceed with "next steps" in this effort.

- On Wednesday, October 17th, five members of the Women's Legislative Caucus toured the Macon YDC. The Caucus had conducted a two-day conference for its members to discuss various issues including mental health issues for juveniles, including treatment. As part of their conference they asked to tour the Macon YDC, the DJJ long term facility for females. While there they were given a facility briefing and they toured specific areas of the facility to include the behavioral health unit. Commissioner Murray stated that this was a very successful venture, giving the legislators a fresh look at how we conduct business at the YDC.
- Lieutenant Governor Casey Cagle made a stop at the Gainesville RYDC last week. Although his visit was not related to DJJ, he was involved in a videoconference meeting and had requested to use the videoconferencing equipment we now have at Gainesville. Commissioner Murray stated that we were delighted to accommodate him and oblige his request. Staff at the facility helped to facilitate the meeting and everything worked to perfection with the equipment. A tour of the facility was offered but he was unable to do so at that time. DJJ has 14 videoconferencing sites up and running including the system in the board room. At some future date a demonstration of that equipment can be conducted for the board if there is interest.
- On November 15th, the Aaron Cohn RYDC in Columbus will be hosting their annual legislative breakfast. This event has been held for many years and always has a good turnout from community leaders and elected officials. The format this year will include a keynote speaker from the community and a facility tour for anyone interested. For more information on this event, please contact Spiro Amburn or Steve Hayes. Commissioner Murray is planning to attend and to deliver a few remarks.
- Governor Perdue has formed a Commission on Mental Health to look at the current conditions of mental health services provided in Georgia and to make recommendations for changes. The Commission will be meeting around the state over the next several months. DJJ has been asked to host a meeting and to make a presentation to the Commission on gaps in mental health services and make recommendations for changes as it relates to mental health services for DJJ youth. This meeting will take place at the Augusta YDC on January 29, 2008. We are currently in the planning stages of this meeting and the Board will be informed once

the final details have been set. A full list of meeting dates and background information about this effort can all be found on the bulletin board section of our web site.

- The opening date for the 2008 legislative session has been announced and it is January 14, 2008.

Office of Training

- The Office of Training will rollout mandatory Customer Service and Sexual Harassment Training to Central Office staff in late November and early December 2007.
- There were 12 graduates of the P.O.S.T. Instructor Training Program held the weeks of September 17-21 (Week I) and October 1-5, 2007 (Week II). The graduation ceremony was held October 5th at the DJJ Training Academy. Graduates included participants from the Division of Program Services, Operations, and Fiscal and Administrative Services. This training is an added value to the instructor structure within DJJ. Commissioner Murray congratulated all graduates for their two-week commitment.
- Commissioner Murray thanked Ronnie Richardson, Director of the Bill Ireland YDC, for providing the graduation remarks at the recent BJCOT graduation on October 12, 2007. There were 46 successful graduates. The current BJCOT program started on Sunday, October 21, 2007 and 52 cadets are enrolled in that class. Graduation is scheduled for November 16, 2007 at 1:30 p.m. at the Georgia Public Safety Training Center Auditorium in Forsyth, Georgia. The graduation speaker for that commencement program is Shirley Turner, Director of the DJJ Office of Continuous Improvement.
- Fabienne Tate, Director, Office of Training and Judge Quintress Gilbert, Judicial Advisory member to the board, attended the 13th National Symposium on Juvenile Services held in San Antonio, Texas, October 14 – 17, 2007. The conference presentations were diverse and provided many opportunities for skill building and professional development.
- The American Correctional Association (ACA) has appointed Fabienne Tate, DJJ Training Director, to the Juvenile Corrections Committee. This committee reviews issues as well as research, and addresses needs relevant to juvenile services. Commissioner Murray stated that he served on this committee in past years and he expressed his belief that Ms. Tate's involvement with this committee will serve the agency well.

- The Annual Child Placement Conference is scheduled for October 29-31, 2007 at the Augusta Marriott and Suites in Augusta, Georgia. The conference will commence at 1:00 p.m. on Monday, October 29th and end at 12:00 p.m. on October 31, 2007. Approximately 50 DJJ staff will be in attendance. DJJ Presenters will include Assistant Training Director Yvonne Saunders-Brown and Coy Satterfield in Education.
- The Annual Office of Human Resources Conference is scheduled for November 27-29, 2007 at the Sea Palms Resort, St. Simons Island, Georgia.
- The Annual Fall DJJ Education Conference was October 15th and 16th in Macon, Georgia. DJJ staff (teachers and others) took part in the two day training conference. Commissioner Murray spoke to the participants at the annual Teacher of the Year luncheon on day 2 as did 2008 Georgia Teacher of the Year Emily Jennette (Jen-net). He stated that her presence and comments made this year's conference that much more special and that the attendees were inspired by her remarks. Janice Brown, Social Studies teacher at Aaron Cohn RYDC was named DJJ Teacher of the Year for 2008-2009. She will compete next spring against all teachers statewide.
- On November 7th the DJJ Customer Service Summit will take place. DJJ managers will meet to be brought up to date on the agency's customer service program. This will be used as a spring board following the Governor's Customer Service Summit next week.

Commissioner Murray stated that we have been working closely with Dr. Tom O'Rourke, DJJ's Customer Service Champion and his committee to enhance our overall plan and at that November 7th meeting DJJ will be rolling out several new internal initiatives that will have, we feel, a great impact on our delivery of quality customer services to Georgia citizens. He invited Board members to attend. The meeting/summit will be in Forsyth at the Georgia Public Safety Training Center in the main auditorium beginning at 9:30 a.m.

Commissioner Murray concluded his report and opened the floor for questions and comments.

Commenting on the Teacher of the Year Award, Chairman Shuman stated to Mr. Herrin if he ever has the chance to have Teacher of the Year, Ms. Emily Jennette, to speak before his school board or other audience, it would be a rewarding experience. He commented that her presentation is very good and there is no doubt why she won the Teacher of the Year Award.

Keeping with the subject, Ms. Sandra Taylor inquired if we (DJJ) were going to recognize our Teacher of the Year at the Legislative conference (breakfast). She commented that that would be a good time for additional recognition. Commissioner

Murray responded that it is a good thought but he is not sure what her schedule is like for that morning but we will certainly look to include that in the agenda. He asked Rob Rosenbloom to assist him with this effort.

Pastor Dexter Rowland inquired if the summit (CYCC/DJJ) in Marietta was videotaped. Mr. Hayes responded that he was not certain but he would look into it and let him know. Pastor Rowland added that he was interested in the ‘trending’ information, but he will get with Mr. Rosenbloom for more information.

Hearing no other questions or comments, the next agenda item was called.

MOA Update/Board Manual

Amy Howell, Legal Services Director
Steve Hayes, Public Affairs Director

Mr. Hayes began the presentation of the manual and stated that he would briefly go through the sections of the manual to acquaint them with the contents. He added that Ms. Howell would provide some details on a few topics later, along with the update on the MOA.

Mr. Hayes stated that work on the manual has been a labor of love and he thanked his staff for their hard work and diligence in their efforts. He then began a highlight of each section of the manual and stated that it would serve as a resource to complement our web site and other available written material and information on DJJ. After the overview of the manual sections, he stated that the Office of Public Affairs is proud of the newsletter that we’ve published and a copy of the recently released newsletter has been provided to them for their review and enjoyment.

He then asked for questions or comments, and hearing none, he turned the floor over to Ms. Amy Howell, Director of Legal Services.

Addressing the Board, Ms. Howell referenced the tab regarding the Board Bylaws and indicated that she had additional documents for them which she then distributed. She noted that there were two separate tabs in the manual regarding bylaws: one tab for the general Board of Juvenile Justice and the other for the DJJ Board of Education. Both sets of bylaws specifically govern the way DJJ operates and the composition of the governing Board.

She also highlighted the following:

- Georgia Code - The most recent code sections that have been updated through the 2007 Legislative Session.

- Open Meetings Act – Of significance is the statute that governs how we operate our meetings; how we provide notice; the timing of notices; publication of the agenda; and, the when and how we go into Executive Sessions.
- Open Records Act – Governs all business documents the department generates. There are exceptions that are exercised but generally the documents are subject to these laws.
- U.S. Department of Justice (USDOJ) – An overview has been included as a status document to give some background information on the Memorandum of Agreement (MOA), and is basically an update on the last annual report. All the system changes that have been implemented since the MOA was agreed upon. Included is specific information on facility capacities, education, and mental health about the system changes that have been put in place, whether they are regarding staffing or policies and procedures, that are responsive to citations within the MOA.
- Critical Dates List – This list has important dates that carry through to April 2007 and beginning negotiations with USDOJ.
- A copy of the original Findings of the MOA and the actual MOA that includes all the terms originally agreed upon with the USDOJ. It does not include any amendments that have been made over the past years but it does include the citations (142) that we have been responsive to.

Ms. Howell stated that she has also provided the Board with copies of some information on Robert's Rules as a guide on common motions that are made. She then concluded her presentation and opened the floor for questions and comments.

Mr. Van Herrin inquired if there are any updates on the MOA, other than what has been provided; more specifically, when negotiations will start up again. Ms. Howell responded that she has no specific updates at this point but as soon as there is an update, an Executive Session will be called to discuss the information.

Hearing no other questions or comments, Chairman Shuman explained to Mr. McGuire that along with serving on the Board of Juvenile Justice, the Board also serves as a state school board and the next agenda item, Education Update, requires a vote as the regular meeting will need to close in order to convene the meeting of the DJJ Board of Education. He then called for a motion.

Ms. Sandra Taylor made a motion to close the regular meeting of the Board of Juvenile Justice to convene the meeting of the DJJ Board of Education. The motion was seconded by Judy Mecum and carried.

Education Update

Dr. Jack Catrett, Special Education Director
DJJ Office of Education

Dr. Catrett opened by extending Dr. O'Rourke's regret that he was not able to attend the meeting. He then presented the education update.

Dr. Catrett stated that he would address any questions following his presentation and then reported the following:

- The two-day education conference was held this month. There were approximately 500 persons in attendance, to include teachers, paraprofessionals, education clerks, principals, and regional principals. Over 35 different workshops were offered, ranging from performance standards in education to how to improve student discipline. He stated that the program was a success and they were pleased with the outcome.
- The Teacher of the Year Program was held during the education conference. The program was spearheaded by Coy Satterfield, Director of Student Support Services. Dr. Catrett thanked Chairman Shuman, Commissioner Murray, Dr. Thomas Coleman, Rob Rosenbloom, and Steve Hayes for their support. He stated that Chairman Shuman and Commissioner Murray spoke to the group and that they were well received.
- It has been a good month for education and we are looking forward to a smooth transition into the holidays. We are currently in the heart of the semester and things are going well.
- Forty percent (40%) of DJJ students receive special education and are served by Section 504 of the Americans with Disabilities Act or student support teams. He stated that that number has been fixed around 38-41 % over the last seven years and he believes we are doing a good job of identifying and serving this population.
- Forty percent (40%) of our teachers are special education certified and the remaining 60% are regular education.
- Special Education Student Profiles:
 - Fifty percent (50%) of students are either behavior disordered (BD); emotionally/behavior disordered (ED/EBD); severely emotionally and/or behaviorally disordered
 - Twenty-five percent (25%) are mildly intellectually disordered (MID) – An IQ of less than 70 but more than 54.

- Twenty percent (20%) have a specific learning (SL) disability, whether in reading, spoken language, written language, math or other areas.
- Five percent (5%) have other exceptionalities, such as vision/hearing impairments, etc.

Dr. Catrett stated that in order to do a good job of serving the kids, they first had to identify them and they have two processes by which to do this. One is through information obtained from other school systems on students who have previously been identified as special education students. The other is by review of records from the previous school and the student's behavior and academic skills in the classroom. If the teacher feels the student could be special education or is experiencing some difficulties, the student is referred to the student support team (SST) using a process called response to intervention (RTI). He then briefly highlighted the process.

Dr. Catrett also brought to the attention of the board some management tools used, including the Special Education Manual that has been approved by the Department of Education and can be found on the DJJ Intranet.

Dr. Catrett also discussed the following:

Teacher Certification Program (TCP) – Licensed by DOE, this program trains regular teachers to be special education teachers. Teachers who enter the program that do not have a Master's degree can sign up for the Atlantic Armstrong State University program (on-line) that uses the same teaching models and get their special education degree and Master's degree at the same time.

Special Education Teaching Assistant – Used to ensure quality control, the average years of experience for TAs is 38 years. Retired special education directors are hired part time to work with teachers at each of our schools to make sure that we are following the process to do onsite training and that their training is current and that the files are in order and the kids are receiving good service. These positions are paid through federal grants.

Dr. Catrett concluded his report and opened the floor for questions and comments.

Mr. Larry Barnes inquired if we have a position on the proposed legislation by the Speaker of the House on taxes that would impact education. He asked how would we be affected and should we take a stance after reviewing the proposal. Dr. Catrett stated that this is a big issue with most of the state superintendents, as was evidenced at a meeting he attended the previous week. However, he stated that ours is a line item budget and we should not be affected by it. Mr. Barnes stated that he wanted to see if we could research that to see if it would impact our school board and to be knowledgeable so that if a decision is to be made, the board would be able to make an informed decision. Dr.

Catrett stated that they would look into it and provide Commissioner Murray with an update.

Mr. Michael Baugh stated that it is almost a dead issue now as they have come to the conclusion that if Richardson's proposal stands, the state would be facing a budget deficit of approximately \$1.5 billion dollars a year. He stated that hopefully after the state Senate conducts their study and Georgia State University conducts their study, it will be a dead issue.

Mr. Van Herrin added that in their school systems they have their own speech and physical therapists. He inquired if DJJ outsources these services. Dr. Catrett responded that we contract for those services except, when possible we use resources available at the local facility, especially at the RYDCs. The speech therapists that work with the kids in their school system usually continue to work with them in our system, therefore having some continuity in the treatment of the kids.

Mr. Perry McGuire inquired if it was true that there are a high percentage of BD students in the public school system and is there a funding mechanism associated with special education classification; do we get federal funding. Dr. Catrett responded that behavior disorders are the largest category of the exceptionalities in public schools. The numbers for special education in public schools is about 9% in Georgia, where DJJ is about 40%. He stated that we have about twice the number of BD/EBD kids than there are in public schools. He explained that on December 1st we have the FTE (Full Time Equivalency) head count and we receive money from the federal government based on that head count, not their exceptionality.

Mr. Herrin asked if we get a flat rate, to which Dr. Catrett responded in the affirmative, adding that during the December 1st count all other school systems also get a flat rate but not for the count in October. In October, our count is more for statistics for the federal government than for funding. Each year from this count they set the head rate which is typically \$600 per child but fluctuates. Mr. Herrin stated that that amount is much lower than what public school systems get through IDEA. Dr. Catrett stated that he believes we have flourished under the funding formula we have now; we have been able to have 40% of our teachers special education certified. He stated that he believes one of the keys to us getting out of the MOA was to train our teachers and make sure we had an adequate ratio of teachers.

Chairman Shuman commented that he noted a great deal of camaraderie among the teachers and that they were very supportive of each other. Dr. Catrett thanked Chairman Shuman for his comments and added that they play as a team and are proud of who they are. He stated that the warm welcome that was given to Chairman Shuman and Commissioner Murray was an indication of how the teachers appreciate the support they have received from them and how much they want to be the best school system in the state.

Hearing no other questions or comments, Chairman Shuman called for a motion to close the meeting of the DJJ Board of Education. Ms. Sandra Taylor made a motion to close the meeting of the DJJ Board of Education and reconvene the regular meeting of the Board of Juvenile Justice. The motion was seconded by Michael Baugh.

At this point Judge Quintress Gilbert spoke about the conference she attended in San Antonio, Texas. The National Partnership on Juvenile Services 13th Symposium was held on October 14-17, 2007. She stated that the conference covered a lot of ground that our DJJ is already doing, in fact, we surpass things that are going on in the nation from what she was able to observe. The sessions she attended were mostly of a behavioral nature. The things that will be seen in the future will revolve around cognitive restructuring and balanced and restorative justice. However, she stated that they do not call it by that name.

Judge Gilbert noted that what she has seen from the bench is more and more kids exhibiting behavior and committing crimes that would bring them back into the detention centers. She also noted that kids are purposely bringing weapons to school and that these incidences are of great concern to her. She noted a particular incident that happened with a youth just a few days ago in her courtroom and stated that maybe these behaviors are something DJJ could look into; to take a survey to determine how many kids in detention are there purposely. She stated that this may shed some light on some programs that could be offered to the kids in cognitive restructuring. Continuing, she stated that if they had a plan they probably wouldn't want to be there; that we are getting more sophisticated kids who know they don't point out enough to stay in the YDC but may be placed by DJJ in another type of program that is offered through the YDC.

Commissioner Murray inquired if the youth expressed why he saw the YDC as being a better quality of life for him. Judge Gilbert responded that it is because his quality of life at home was bad and we are returning kids back to their homes. She stated that the other alternative is to place them with DFCS but because of the crime level, DFCS doesn't want the child to be placed with them. One of the things that she saw at the conference is that some DJJ jurisdictions are partnering with mental health and providing psychologists to the court on an individual basis, like what is being done with the Appleseed Project. She stated that so far we have not been able to get Appleseed to contact us back to set up any kind of structure for that. She added that this might be a community service that DJJ could look at.

Judge Gilbert stated that the other thing she wanted to mention to group is about the upcoming legislative session. She stated that the judges have some bills that they are trying to get through as far as DJJ is concerned. She suggested that they try to find out the dates that these bills will be introduced. She informed them that the Council of Juvenile Court Judges appoints each judge a day to spend time at a legislative session and this may be something for the Board to consider.

Ms. Taylor stated that one of the things Judge Gilbert pointed out was something that has been of concern to her also. She stated that returning kids to their home environment is an issue that needs to be addressed. She expressed her concern that there is a problem with the homes that got them into our care and putting them back into the homes without addressing the issues in the home will continue the cycle. She suggested looking into some of our community funding going towards funding treatment of systemic problems in the home or another concept may be to partner more closely with DHR on those situations where we see this happening. She shared that in her practice, she sees a lot of children that are coming out of a bad home environment that are not bad enough for DFCS to step in but are bad enough to see that at a very young age that those children will be in our care a few years down the road. She added that this may be one wing of the new trend in policy that may come back to bite us if we don't address the problem(s) in the home prior to sending them back.

Chairman Shuman stated that this is not a new problem, that he saw the same problem back in the late 60s. He stated that this is a cyclical problem and he is not sure if we need to do more studies, as when the home is bad, it stays bad.

Chairman Shuman then revisited the motion to close the meeting of the DJJ Board of Education. Hearing no other questions or comments, the motion was carried and the meeting of the DJJ Board of Education was closed.

Board Secretary, Daniel Menefee asked for the privilege to introduce a guest. He then introduced Richard Williams, a previous DJJ resident at the Sumter YDC. Mr. Menefee stated that Richard is also a recent graduate who was very busy while at the Sumter YDC doing positive things during the relief effort after the tornado in Americus/Sumter County. In addition to graduating he applied to Georgia Military College and was accepted. He applied for jobs and is now assistant manager at a Payless Shoe store in the metropolitan Atlanta area. He stated that these events took place over a space of only a few weeks and he was only released on October 3rd.

Mr. Menefee stated that Richard was hard at work while in the facility. After speaking with many people in the facility he was told how Richard was a tutor to some of the other residents, helping them to get their GED and to meet their graduation education requirements. He then turned the floor over to Mr. Williams if he wished to address the Board.

Mr. Williams greeted the Board and stated that he did not wish to take up much of their time but he did want to speak to them to let them know of the impact the Board and the Department has had on his life. He stated that in 2004 he was adjudicated on charges of forgery. He stated that while being detained at DJJ he learned to take things like education more seriously. Learning by example from staff and mentors there and the difference between having a degree and not having one had an impact on him and his view on education.

He stated that he is very liberal and has a keen interest in politics. A chance encounter with a mentor at the facility helped him to articulate his views in ways that people can understand. This was one of the things that was the basis for his decision to major in political science.

Mr. Williams stated that he is not a thug and did not fit in with the general population. He persevered and stayed with his program and helped anyone he could along the way and tried to be a positive role model. He agreed with the comments made by Judge Gilbert and Ms. Taylor about guys who have nothing at home and they have nothing to look forward to when they get back. He stated that he knows guys who have gotten back into the system on purpose because they know they can get a free meal and a place to sleep; hygienic items, candy, etc. These things mean a lot to them because they don't have anything better. He stated that once he found out that incentives could be had for doing well, he was motivated by it and encouraged others to do the same. He stated that a Level 4 program was implemented at the Sumter facility that allowed for residents to wear their own clothes, work on off campus disaster relief teams, and work on projects like Habitat for Humanity. He stated that these are small things because people do them every day. But at the facility it's a big thing. When guys learn that they will get rewarded for doing something right it motivates them to keep doing it. He revealed that that is how it worked with him. If he had not been rewarded for the good things he did, he would never have thought there was a reason to do good. There are guys who are always punished for the wrong things they do, but they feel like they are not recognized for things that they do right. Mr. Williams posed the scenario: "A guy who acts up every week, then one week goes by with no disciplinary report. What's the harm in giving him a certificate to recognize his good behavior? He stated that this may seem like a small thing but to that guy it will be an accomplishment and will motivate him to continue to do well. The sanctions and the rewards are a balance.

Mr. Williams stated he met Mr. Menefee at a DJJ Board meeting at Sumter. After they conversed and Mr. Menefee shared some things with him they made a connection and remained in touch. He stated that Mr. Menefee is more than just a Board member to him; he is like a father who he has not had in his life since he was eight years old; he is also a mentor. He gives most of his success to DJJ stating that if he had never come to us, he would not be where he is today.

At the conclusion of his remarks, Mr. Williams received enthusiastic applause accompanied by a standing ovation.

Chairman's Comments

J. Daniel Shuman, Board Chairman

For the benefit of the new members, Chairman Shuman noted that the November and December meetings will be combined. So saying, he informed the Board that the next scheduled meeting of the Board of Juvenile Justice is scheduled for December 13, 2007

at 11:00 a.m. at DJJ Central Office. This will be the 2nd Thursday of the month instead of the standard 4th Thursday. He asked members to please make a note of the date.

Hearing no other questions or comments, Mr. Shuman called for a motion to adjourn.

Sandra Taylor made a motion to adjourn the October 25, 2007 meeting of the Board of Juvenile Justice. The motion was seconded by Van Herrin and carried.

The meeting was adjourned.

J. Daniel Shuman, Chair
Board of Juvenile Justice

Albert Murray
Commissioner

Daniel A. Menefee, Secretary
Board of Juvenile Justice