



FDLE's Services Consistent With Its Mission; Salaries Vary; and Staffing Levels Comparable to Other Law Enforcement Agencies

at a glance

Florida Department of Law Enforcement current activities conform to its mission. Since the 2001 terrorist attacks, the Legislature has expanded FDLE's scope of services to include domestic security and the Capitol Police. Investigations and forensic analyses compose the bulk of the agency's activities.

Although it is consistent with FDLE's mission, national research has concluded that the Drug Abuse Resistance Education (DARE) Program is ineffective. The Legislature should consider redirecting the program's \$515,000 in state funds to other activities.

Compared to other law enforcement units within Florida, FDLE entry-level investigator salaries are higher, reflecting their greater experience level. Salaries of Capitol Police officers are in the low to mid-range, and FDLE leadership, regional director, and program director salaries are in the mid-range when compared to those of counterparts in other states. FDLE's span-of-control is comparable to that of other law enforcement units.

Scope

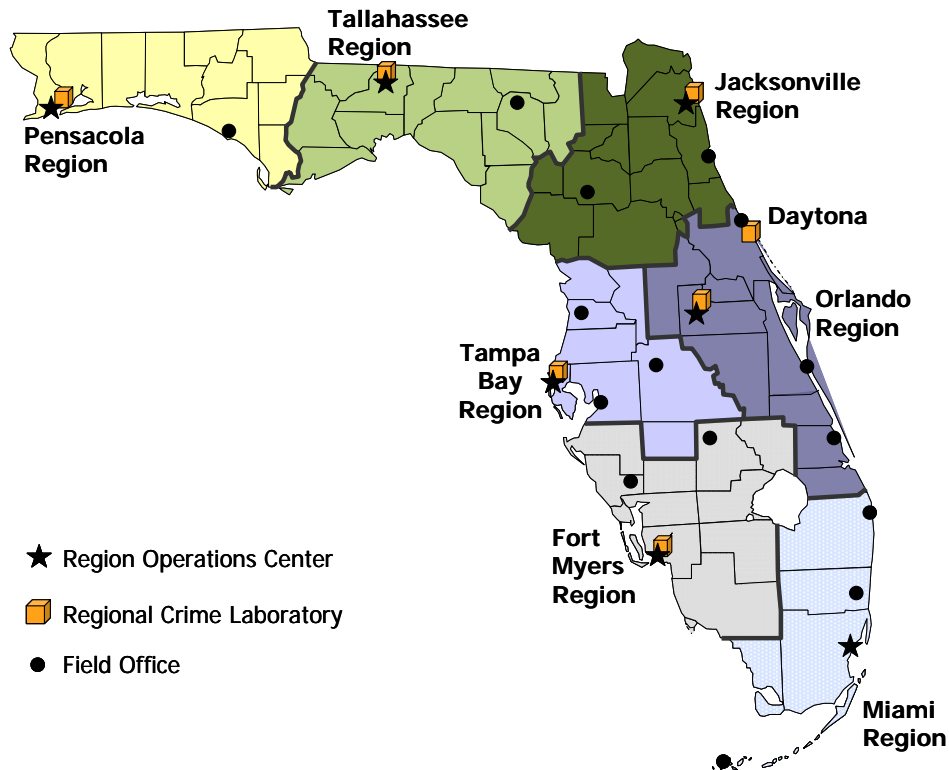
Chapter 2005-70, *Laws of Florida*, directed OPPAGA to conduct a comprehensive review of the Florida Department of Law Enforcement (FDLE). As directed, this review addresses three questions.

- Are FDLE activities consistent with its mission?
- How do FDLE salaries compare to other law enforcement units?
- Is FDLE's span-of-control consistent with that of other law enforcement entities?

Background

FDLE's mission is to provide services in partnership with local, state, and federal agencies in order to prevent, investigate, and solve crimes. As shown in Exhibit 1, the agency is divided into seven regions and 15 field offices. It operates seven forensic crime laboratories throughout the state.

Exhibit 1 Florida Department of Law Enforcement Operational Regions



Source: Florida Department of Law Enforcement.

FDLE operates five programs

The department is organized into five programs¹:

- Criminal Justice Investigative and Forensic Sciences;
- Criminal Justice Professionalism;
- Criminal Justice Information;
- Capitol Police; and
- Executive Direction and Business Support.

The Criminal Justice Investigative and Forensic Sciences Program conducts investigations and forensic analyses for major crimes and to support local law enforcement agencies. The program's investigative unit focuses on major drug, economic, and violent crimes; public assistance fraud; domestic security; and intelligence gathering used to assist other agencies and identify crime trends. The forensic sciences unit analyzes the evidence from

criminal investigations, including fingerprints, toxicology, deoxyribonucleic acid (DNA), and firearms. During Fiscal Year 2004-05, the program conducted 4,775 criminal investigations and completed 79,254 evidence analyses. For Fiscal Year 2005-06 the Legislature appropriated this program \$118.9 million and 1,213 positions.

The Criminal Justice Professionalism Program develops training, certification, disciplinary, and testing standards for Florida's sworn law enforcement, correctional, and correctional probation officers. Program officials also train local law enforcement officers on how to teach Drug Abuse Resistance Education (DARE) to district schools. In Fiscal Year 2005-06, the Legislature appropriated the professionalism program \$17.6 million and 112 positions.

The Criminal Justice Information Program maintains criminal history and fingerprint identification databases that allow law enforcement agencies to access and share information needed to identify and apprehend

¹ Chapter 20.201, *F.S.*

criminals, recover property, and solve crimes. These databases contain information on 368,910 registered felons, 36,279 sex offenders, and maintains the Missing Children Information Clearinghouse which has information on Florida's 949 open cases of missing children.² This program also provides criminal history background checks to agencies, businesses, and private citizens. For Fiscal Year 2005-06, the Legislature appropriated the program \$43.7 million and 387 positions.

The Capitol Police provide law enforcement protection for state buildings, employees, and visitors as well as security for the Governor, Lieutenant Governor, and selected state officials. The force includes patrol (foot, bicycle, and vehicle), communications, protective services, explosive disposal, investigations, and K-9. In Fiscal Year 2005-06, the Legislature appropriated the program \$5.3 million and 88 positions.

The Executive Direction and Business Support Program, with 124 positions, develops the agency budget, provides personnel services, and distributes federal grants to local criminal justice agencies. For Fiscal Year 2005-06, the Legislature appropriated this program \$6 million in general revenue and state trust funds. The program administered \$97 million in federal grants, for which it imposed up to a 4% administrative fee, as authorized by the varying provisions in the grants.

Questions and Answers —

Are FDLE activities consistent with agency mission?

FDLE's mission is to provide..."services in partnership with local, state, and federal criminal justice agencies to prevent, investigate, and solve crimes."³ The department's activities conform to this mission. The scope of services which the agency is responsible for has expanded in recent years to include domestic

security and the Capitol Police. Most of the department's activities are in the areas of investigations and forensic analysis, which are strongly tied to its mission. While the Drug Abuse Resistance Education (DARE) Program is consistent with FDLE's mission, national research has shown that the program is ineffective.

The Legislature has expanded FDLE's scope of services to include domestic security and the Capitol Police

Since the 2001 terrorist attacks, the Legislature has expanded FDLE's scope of services to include domestic security. In Fiscal Year 2002-03, the Legislature appropriated \$2.3 million and 35 positions to the agency for these additional responsibilities. These responsibilities are consistent with the agency's mission of detecting, preventing, and solving crime in partnership with other criminal justice agencies. Under its expanded mission, the department has worked with local, state, and federal agencies to develop

- strategies and plans to deal with potential or actual terrorist acts affecting the state;
- a statewide domestic security information system to collect, analyze, and share intelligence information among federal, state, and local agencies;
- training and exercises for ensuring that first responders react uniformly to terrorist acts; and
- security plans and compliance procedures for securing Florida's critical infrastructure, such as water supply, power grids, phone system, ports, and borders.

Consistent with FDLE's role of protecting against terrorist threats, the 2002 Legislature transferred command of the Capitol Police from the Department of Management Services to FDLE. The role of the Capitol Police has expanded to include officer training in FBI-certified bomb deactivation, explosives disposal, and the use of dogs to detect explosives.

² Data as of December 1, 2005.

³ FDLE Statement of Organization, July 2005.

Investigations and forensics, the bulk of agency activities, show strong mission accountability

FDLE's current activities are consistent with its mission, and the department has systems to ensure that its operations conform to this strategic direction. The majority of the department's resources are allocated to the investigations and forensics program. To help ensure that these activities are consistent with its mission, FDLE has established a written statewide investigative strategy that outlines criteria for opening cases and guides the department in working with other criminal justice agencies. The strategy helps ensure that investigations fall within the agency's purview and that it does not use state monies for activities that should be handled by local, federal, or other state agencies. As shown in Exhibit 2, FDLE categorizes investigations into seven categories of cases. Criteria for opening cases in these categories vary, but generally require that the case involve criminal organizations, major drug trafficking, and/or multiple victims and jurisdictions.

Investigations are tracked in a database that includes notes justifying how each investigation meets the criteria for FDLE involvement. Agency leadership can monitor these investigations to ensure that they are timely and conform to the agency mission. This process, coupled with clear criteria for opening investigations, helps provide accountability to the Legislature that FDLE only accepts those cases that cannot be handled by other law enforcement agencies.

**Exhibit 2
FDLE Investigations Are Opened Only If They Fall Within One of Seven Categories**

Types of Investigations Conducted by FDLE

Domestic Security	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Weapons of mass destruction ▪ Schemes to finance or support terrorism ▪ Immigration violations linked to terrorism ▪ Computer crimes linked to terrorism
Major Drug Crime	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Organized trafficking enterprises ▪ Money laundering
Major Economic Crime	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Organized schemes to defraud ▪ Racketeer Influenced and Corrupt Organizations (RICO) ▪ Crimes against Florida government ▪ Computer crime schemes ▪ Identity theft ▪ Money laundering
Public Integrity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Public corruption ▪ Felony allegations within state agencies ▪ Use of force by law enforcement or correctional officers ▪ Official misconduct involving public employees or law enforcement officers
Violent Crime	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Homicide/Sexual Battery/Robbery ▪ Crimes against children ▪ Violent fugitives
Public Assistance Fraud	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Employee fraud ▪ Program eligibility fraud ▪ Food stamp voucher fraud and misuse
Intelligence	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Intelligence gathering to spot crime trends ▪ Intelligence gathering to assist other agencies

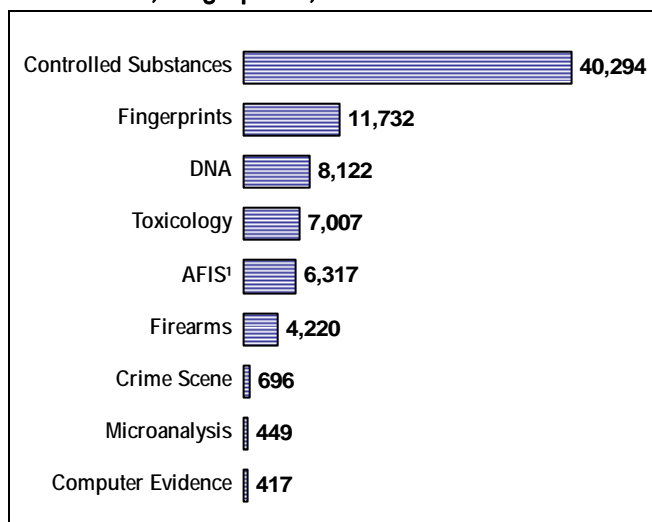
Source: FDLE Statewide Investigative Strategy, February 1, 2005.

The forensics unit analyzes evidence obtained during criminal investigations and exercises similar accountability. This unit has established criteria for prioritizing evidence submitted by law enforcement agencies. It tracks the most common types of evidence submitted and how long each evidence submission takes to analyze.

This information enables the unit to identify its resource needs and helps ensure that its analysts meet productivity targets. The criteria also help to avoid spending state resources analyzing evidence that could be handled by local law enforcement agencies that operate their own crime labs.^{4,5} As shown in Exhibit 3, controlled substances, fingerprints, and DNA are the most common evidence submissions.

Exhibit 3

Most FDLE Crime Labs Analyses Test for Controlled Substances, Fingerprints, and DNA



¹ Automated Fingerprint Identification System.

Source: Florida Department of Law Enforcement Crime Lab, Fiscal Year 2004-05.

Although consistent with FDLE's mission, DARE provides little return on investment

The department provides training and technical assistance to local law enforcement agencies that provide the Drug Abuse Resistance Education (DARE) Program to local schools. DARE is a 17-week course designed to teach skills for resisting drugs, alcohol, and tobacco. It is taught by uniformed police officers in a classroom setting generally to youth in the last grades of

elementary school. FDLE allocates 4.5 positions and \$515,000 to coordinate the program, train police officers on the curriculum, and monitor their activities. Presently, 61 of the state's 67 counties operate DARE in their school systems.

While DARE's drug resistance training goals are laudable, a large body of national research has concluded that the program is ineffective. For example, the U.S. Government Accountability Office in 2003, after examining a series of studies on the effects of DARE, concluded that the program had "no statistically significant long-term effect on preventing illicit drug use."⁶ Similar results have been reported in numerous other published studies.⁷ Due to these studies, many school districts throughout the country are dropping the program.⁸

The department has justified the DARE Program because of its popularity with law enforcement agencies. The department commissioned a study after our 1998 review, which indicated that parents and teachers supported the program.⁹ However, that study did not measure whether DARE reduced drug use. The 2001 Legislature appropriated the department \$50,000 to study the program's impact in Florida, but the department did not conduct the study and declined to accept the funding.

⁶ *Youth Illicit Drug Use Prevention: DARE Long-Term Evaluations and Federal Efforts to Identify Effective Programs*, Government Accounting Office, GAO-03-172R, January 15, 2003.

⁷ Ennet, S., Tobler, N., Ringwalt, C., and Flewelling, R., "How Effective is Drug Abuse Education? A Meta-Analysis of Project DARE Outcome Evaluations," *Journal of Public Health*, Vol. 84, No. 9, September 1994; Shepard, E., *The Economic Costs of D.A.R.E.*, Institute of Industrial Relations, Research Paper No. 22, November 2001; West, S., and O'Neal, K., "Project D.A.R.E. Outcome Effectiveness Revisited," *American Journal of Public Health*, Vol. 94, No. 6, June 2004. Wyson, E., Aniskiewicz, R., and Wright, D., "Truth and Dare: Tracking Drug Education to Graduation and as Symbolic Politics," *Social Problems*, Vol. 41, No. 3, August 1994; Rosenbaum, D. and Hanson, G., "Assessing the Effects of School-Based Drug Education: A Six-Year Multi-Level Analysis of Project D.A.R.E.," *Journal of Research in Crime and Delinquency*, Vol. 35, No. 4, 1998. While a few other studies have found the program to produce an effect, these studies have been criticized for their lack of rigor.

⁸ For example, school districts in California, Michigan, Illinois, Washington, and Wisconsin have dropped the DARE program.

⁹ *Program Evaluation and Justification Review, Florida Department of Law Enforcement*, OPPAGA [Report No. 97-76](#), June 1998.

⁴ Five counties have their own crime labs: Broward, Dade, Indian River, Palm Beach, and Pinellas.

⁵ The FDLE crime lab has a backlog in analyzing DNA cases due to a surge of submissions for DNA analyses, as well as the post-sentencing DNA analysis requirements of s. 925.11, *F.S.*

Given the body of research that is now available indicating that the DARE Program is ineffective, the Legislature should consider using the \$515,000 in state funds that currently support the program for other purposes. Local law enforcement agencies that wish to continue to provide the program in their local schools could continue to do so.

How do FDLE salaries compare to those of other law enforcement units?

FDLE's sworn law enforcement investigators make somewhat higher median salaries than those of most other state law enforcement units, while Capitol Police salaries are somewhat below the median levels of most other law enforcement units we examined. These differences to some extent reflect the higher experience levels required for FDLE's entry-level investigators. FDLE leadership salaries are generally comparable to those of other states' law enforcement agencies.

Compared to other state law enforcement units, median salaries for FDLE's investigative staff are somewhat higher, while Capitol Police salaries are somewhat lower

As shown in Exhibit 4, when compared to the salaries of other state law enforcement units, salaries for FDLE's investigative staff tend to be higher for entry-level staff while salaries for its Capitol Police officers are generally lower.¹⁰

FDLE's investigative officers and their base-level supervisors have median salaries that are higher than seven of the eight other state law enforcement units we examined. Its mid-level and headquarters managers as well as regional directors have higher median salaries than five of the eight other agencies.

¹⁰ FDLE's investigative staff compose 88% of its sworn staff and include special agents, special agent supervisors, assistant special agents in charge, and special agents in charge (regional directors). These positions are not ranked in the same way as traditional law enforcement units are, e.g., major, captain, lieutenant. However, for broad comparison purposes and based on their levels of responsibility, we considered FDLE managers and special agents in charge to be generally comparable to other agencies' law enforcement unit directors; assistant special agents in charge and special agent supervisors to mid-level managers; and special agents were comparable to investigators and base-level supervisors.

Exhibit 4

Compared to Other State Sworn Units, Salaries for FDLE's Investigative Branch and Capitol Police Vary

Law Enforcement Unit	Median Salary ^{1,2}		
	Investigators and Base-Level Supervisors	Mid-Level Managers	Headquarter Managers and Region Directors ³
Florida Department of Law Enforcement - Investigative and Forensic Sciences	\$52,924	\$77,093	\$106,271
Florida Department of Law Enforcement - Capitol Police	41,362	71,690	98,443
Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services - Agricultural Law Enforcement	44,606	78,876	105,301
Department of Business and Professional - Regulation Division of Alcoholic Beverages and Tobacco	40,551	72,099	83,491
Department of Environmental Protection - Bureau of Environmental Investigations	40,428	80,161	112,160
Department of Financial Services - Division of Fire Marshal	44,355	67,669	78,322
Department of Financial Services - Division of Insurance Fraud	43,020	71,422	93,022
Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission - Division of Law Enforcement	49,740	75,023	113,017
Department of Highway Safety and Motor Vehicles - Florida Highway Patrol	57,224	83,962	114,342
Department of Legal Affairs - Medicaid Fraud Control Unit	45,606	66,356	96,042

¹ Salaries do not include salary additives such as competitive area differentials; nor do they include incentive pay plans, or performance plans.

² FDLE positions are not ranked in the same way as traditional law enforcement units are. However, for broad comparison purposes and based on their levels of responsibility, we considered FDLE managers and special agents in charge (regional directors) to be generally comparable to other agencies' law enforcement unit directors; assistant special agents in charge and special agent supervisors to mid-level managers; and special agents were comparable to investigators and base-level supervisors.

³ This category does not include those at the agency secretary or executive director level.

Source: OPPAGA analysis of August 15, 2005, People First (state personnel system) data, law enforcement unit websites, and interviews with agency personnel staff.

FDLE requires higher experience levels for its investigators than most other law enforcement units, as these staff handle a wider variety of crimes, often affecting multiple victims across multiple jurisdictions. Other state law enforcement units typically require recruits to graduate from a law enforcement academy, be certified by the Criminal Justice Standards and Training Commission, and have between one to three years of sworn or related experience. In contrast, FDLE requires entry-level investigative officers to have an additional five years of investigative experience in addition to law enforcement certification. These increased requirements are reflected in higher initial salaries, and these salaries remain higher as the investigators advance in position and tenure.

Median salaries of Capital Police officers, in contrast, are lower than six of the eight state law enforcement units we examined. Median salaries of Capital Police mid-level managers, however, are in the mid-range of the other agencies (higher than three units, lower than the other five), as are median salaries of its leadership staff (higher than four other units while lower than four).

FDLE leadership staff salaries are comparable to those of other state's law enforcement units

FDLE's leadership staff salaries are generally comparable to those of similar law enforcement agencies in other states. As shown in Exhibit 5, the salary of FDLE's executive director is higher than those paid to two other states' comparable

positions but is lower than that paid by two other states. Median salaries for other FDLE leadership positions (assistant and program directors) were similarly at the mid-point to those paid by other states. However, median salaries for FDLE's regional directors were the highest among the states.¹¹

Is FDLE's span-of-control consistent with that of other law enforcement entities?

FDLE's span-of-control, i.e., the number of sworn staff directly reporting to each manager, fell within range of other sworn units within and outside of Florida.¹² Span-of-control is a proxy for how "top-heavy" an agency is—the larger the span-of-control, the fewer the agency's layers of management. Comparisons for FDLE's upper, middle, and lower levels of management revealed span-of-control to be narrower at top management levels and broader at middle and lower levels of management than other state agency's sworn units.

¹¹ We selected for comparison the state law enforcement agencies in North Carolina, Texas, Illinois, and Georgia because of their similarity to FDLE in operation and command structure.

¹² With the exception of Capitol Police, these comparisons were limited by FDLE's investigative staff not being assigned ranks typical of sworn units, e.g., major and captain. To make our comparison, we reviewed organizational charts, pay scales, job responsibilities, and discussed the issue with FDLE officials to determine that, for broad comparison purposes, an FDLE regional director is comparable to a major, a chief of investigations is comparable to a captain, a special agent supervisor is comparable to a lieutenant, and a special agent is comparable to an investigator II or sergeant.

Exhibit 5

FDLE Leadership Salaries Are Generally Commensurate to Those of Other States¹

	Florida Department of Law Enforcement	N. Carolina Bureau of Investigation	Illinois State Police	Georgia Bureau of Investigation	Texas Department of Public Safety
Executive Director	\$132,000	\$98,000	\$112,600 ²	\$135,200	\$150,000
Assistant Director(s)	113,500	N/A	129,600	121,600	120,000
Program Director(s) ³	98,900	82,200	125,600	104,000	97,800
Regional/District Director(s)	105,900	71,200	105,000	91,000	82,000

¹ Effective June 30, 2005.

² This is a cabinet position, and the salary is capped by statute.

³ FDLE program directors are officials in charge of the Criminal Justice Investigative and Forensic Sciences, Criminal Justice Professionalism, Criminal Justice Information; and Capitol Police; and, Executive Direction and Business Support programs.

Source: Florida Department of Law Enforcement, North Carolina State Bureau of Investigation, Illinois State Police, Georgia Bureau of Investigation, and the Texas Department of Public Safety.

FDLE's span-of-control is comparable to that of other sworn units within and outside Florida

FDLE's span-of-control is somewhat narrower than most agencies at the top management levels, but somewhat broader than most at middle and lower management levels. The span-of-control for the Capitol Police is comparable at top management levels, somewhat narrower at mid-management levels, and larger than most other law enforcement units at lower management levels. (See Exhibit 6.) Overall, FDLE's span-of-

control is consistent with span-of-control recommendations by the National Incident Management System of the Department of Homeland Security.

FDLE's span-of-control is also comparable to that of other states' law enforcement units. Exhibit 7 shows FDLE has a comparable span-of-control to North Carolina, Texas, Illinois, and Georgia—all of which are similar to FDLE in structure and operation.

Exhibit 6

FDLE Span-of-Control Is Consistent with Other Law Enforcement Units

Law Enforcement Unit	Operational Span-of-Control (Ratio)					
	1 : 2		1 : 5		1 : 6	
Florida Department of Law Enforcement (sworn staff other than Capitol Police)	Regional Director ¹	Chiefs of Investigation	Chief of Investigations	Special Agent Supervisors	Special Agent Supervisor	Special Agents
Florida Department of Law Enforcement, Capitol Police	Majors	Lieutenants	Lieutenant ²	Sergeants	Sergeant	Officers
Department of Highway Safety and Motor Vehicles, Florida Highway Patrol	Major	Captains	Captain	Lieutenants	Lieutenant	Investigators
Department of Business and Professional Regulation, Division of Alcoholic Beverages and Tobacco	Major	Captains	Captain	Lieutenants	Lieutenant	Agents
Department of Legal Affairs, Medicaid Fraud	Major	Captains	Captain	Lieutenants	Lieutenant	Investigator
Department of Financial Services, Division of Fire Marshal	Major	Captains	Captain	Lieutenants	Lieutenant	Detectives
Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services, Agricultural Law Enforcement	Major	Captain	Captain	Lieutenants	Lieutenant	Investigator
Department of Financial Services, Insurance Fraud	Major	Captains	Captain	Lieutenants	Lieutenant	Investigator
Department of Environmental Protection, Bureau of Environmental Investigations,	Major	Captain	Captain	Lieutenants	Lieutenant	Investigator
Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission, Division of Law Enforcement	Major	Captain	Captain	Lieutenants	Lieutenant	Investigator

¹ FDLE's span-of-control for this category includes supervision of a non-sworn forensic chief.

² Various agencies use different titles for the same level of supervision, but the levels are generally comparable, e.g., the Capitol Police has no captain position, but its lieutenants function at the same supervisory level as captains in other agencies.

Source: Organization charts supplied by the above agencies for Fiscal Year 2005-06.

Exhibit 7**FDLE Span-of-Control for Sworn Staff Is Consistent With Similar Agencies in Other States**

Law Enforcement Unit	Operational Span-of-Control (Ratio)					
Florida Department of Law Enforcement (sworn staff other than Capitol Police)	1 : 2 Regional Director ¹ Chiefs of Investigation		1 : 5 Chief of Investigations Special Agent Supervisors		1 : 6 Special Agent Supervisor Special Agents	
Georgia Bureau of Investigation	1 : 4 Chief of Investigations Regional Directors		1 : 6 Regional Director Senior Agent in Charge		1 : 7 Senior Agent in Charge Special Agents	
North Carolina State Bureau of Investigation	1 : 7 Assistant Director Field Services District Supervisors		1 : 5 District Supervisor Criminal Specialists		1 : 5 Criminal Specialists Agents	
Texas Department of Public Safety	1 : 7 Major Captains		1 : 3 Captain Lieutenants		1 : 5 Lieutenant Sergeants	
Illinois State Police	1 : 4 Zone Commander Lieutenants		1 : 5 Lieutenants Master Sergeants		1 : 8 Master Sergeant Special Agents /Sergeants	

¹ FDLE's span-of-control for this category includes supervision of a non-sworn forensic chief. States use different titles for the same supervisory levels.

Source: Law enforcement agencies shown above.

Recommendations —————

While the Drug Abuse Resistance Education (DARE) Program's drug resistance training goals are laudable, a large body of national research concludes that the program is ineffective. We recommend that the Legislature consider discontinuing FDLE's role in the program and reallocate the associated \$515,000 in state funds to other purposes that could provide a higher return on investment.

Agency Response —————

In accordance with the provisions of s. 11.51(5), *Florida Statutes*, a draft of our report was submitted to the Commissioner of the Florida Department of Law Enforcement for his review and response.

The Commissioner's written response is reproduced in its entirety in Appendix A.

Appendix A



Florida Department of Law Enforcement

Guy M. Tunnell, Commissioner

*Jeb Bush, Governor
Charlie Crist, Attorney General
Tom Gallagher, Chief Financial Officer
Charles H. Bronson, Commissioner of Agriculture*

February 21, 2006

Mr. Gary R. VanLandingham, Director
OPPAGA
Room 312, Claude Pepper Building
Tallahassee, Florida 32399-1475

Dear Mr. VanLandingham:

We have received the preliminary findings and conclusions from the following report:
**FDLE's Services Consistent with Mission, Salaries Vary, and
Staffing Levels Comparable to Other Law Enforcement Agencies**

Below is the Florida Department of Law Enforcement's response to the recommendation:

Recommendation: While the Drug Abuse Resistance Education (DARE) Program's drug resistance training goals are laudable, a large body of national research concludes that the program is ineffective. We recommend that the Legislature consider discontinuing FDLE's role in the program and reallocate the associated \$515,000 in state funds to other purposes that could provide a higher return on investment.

FDLE Response: Since 1988 when FDLE began providing statewide program management for DARE, Florida schools and communities have continued to select DARE to help educate our state's youth. FDLE is utilized for statewide coordination to ensure compliance with national standards, offer technical assistance, and provide thorough and consistent training and certification of the law enforcement officers teaching this curriculum. While the effectiveness of the program may be debated, the law enforcement presence in the elementary, middle and high schools helps to establish rapport and trust between students and law enforcement which has tremendous potential in terms of crime prevention. The Department believes that the decline in drug usage among Florida's youth in recent years, as reported by the Office of Drug Control, reflects the positive effects of a variety of prevention programs like DARE in our state, and emphasizes the continued need for statewide involvement and intervention in Florida's schools and communities.

The results of the comprehensive review of FDLE and the comments in the report are appreciated. If you require further information, please contact me or Inspector General Al Dennis at 410-7225.

Sincerely,


Guy M. Tunnell
Commissioner

GMT/ALD

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Office of Executive Director
Post Office Box 1489, Tallahassee, Florida 32302-1489 • (850) 410-7001
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- [Florida Government Accountability Report \(FGAR\)](#) is an Internet encyclopedia of Florida state government. FGAR offers concise information about state programs, policy issues, and performance.
- [Best Financial Management Practices Reviews of Florida school districts](#). In accordance with the *Sharpening the Pencil Act*, OPPAGA and the Auditor General jointly conduct reviews to determine if a school district is using best financial management practices to help school districts meet the challenge of educating their students in a cost-efficient manner.

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Project supervised by Marti Harkness (850/487-9233)

Project conducted by Linda Vaughn, Vic Williams, Jason Gaitanis, and Jenny Wilhelm

Gary R. VanLandingham, OPPAGA Director