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Justification Review



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Report No. 99-45

Juvenile Detention Program's Performance Improved; Staffing Needs to Be Revisited

at a glance

The Department of Juvenile Justice is seeking legislative approval to reorganize; this step would increase the autonomy and accountability of the Detention Program.

The effectiveness of home detention has improved. The return rate for youth who committed new crimes declined slightly, and the return rate for youth who failed to appear in court was cut by more than half. However, the program's staffing standard has significant limitations and should be revisited.

Secure detention performance has also improved. Overcrowding, which has been a concern for years, has markedly decreased, although half of the centers remain over-utilized. The rate of escapes has significantly declined, and the rates for youth-on-youth and youth-on-staff assaults also declined. However, outdated staffing patterns and unusually high turnover limit the efficiency of secure detention and create high overtime and training costs.

Purpose

This report presents the conclusions of our Program Evaluation and Justification Review of the Department of Juvenile Justice Detention Program. The program began operating under performance-based program budgeting in Fiscal Year 1998-99.

Chapter 94-249, *Laws of Florida*, directs OPPAGA to conduct justification reviews of each program during its second year of operating under a performance-based program budget to evaluate program performance and identify policy alternatives for improving services or reducing costs. Appendix A summarizes our conclusions regarding the issues the law requires to be considered in a justification review. This report is the first in a series of justification reviews of Department of Juvenile Justice programs, which are phasing into performance-based budgeting in conjunction with the scheduled data capabilities of a new computer information system.

Background

The primary purpose of detention is to ensure public safety while providing a short-term physically restrictive or closely supervised, safe and humane environment for juveniles who are detained pending legal action. The detention program supervises youth

- before a judge determines whether they are guilty of crimes (pre-adjudication);

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- that have been adjudicated guilty, but have not been sentenced (pre-disposition); and
- that have been sentenced, but are waiting for beds to become available in the juvenile justice commitment facility to which they have been assigned.

The number of youth in detention is outside the control of the Detention Program. The number of detained youth awaiting adjudication and sentencing is determined by the timeliness of the judicial process, and the number waiting for commitment beds is dependent upon the capacity of juvenile commitment programs.

The assignment of a youth to either a secure detention center or home detention is primarily determined by the nature of the youth's current offense and assessed risk level.

When juveniles are arrested for a delinquent act, law enforcement officers bring them to a juvenile assessment center, county jail, or a detention facility. Juveniles who do not meet the criteria for being detained are released; juveniles who are eligible for detention are assessed to determine their risk level.¹ Staff use the department's risk assessment instrument to gauge each juvenile's risk to public safety or likelihood of not appearing in court. Juveniles with higher risk assessment scores are placed in secure detention. Juveniles with lower scores are considered a lower public safety risk and are sent to home detention.² A detention hearing is held within 24 hours, and a judge decides if the juvenile should be released or remain in secure or home detention.

¹ The criteria for placing a child in detention are defined in sections 985.213 and 985.215, *F.S.* In most circumstances, youth charged with felony crimes involving violence or possession of a firearm are eligible for detention; youth charged with misdemeanor crimes usually do not meet the criteria for being held in detention and are released.

² A third type of detention, non-secure, in which youth are placed in contracted residential homes, is being phased out in Fiscal Year 2000-2001.

The Detention Program operates 22 detention centers throughout the state. In Fiscal Year 1998-99, there were 31,729 admissions to home detention and 60,397 admissions to secure detention. During that period, the average daily population was 2,224 for home detention and 2,008 for secure detention.

Program Cost and Funding

The average per diem cost per youth is \$118 for secure detention and \$11 for home detention. Electronic monitoring of youth on home detention costs an additional \$5 per day per youth.³

The detention program is funded primarily through general revenue and receives some grants and donations trust funds.⁴ As shown in Exhibit 1, the Legislature has increased detention funding for the past four years.

Exhibit 1 Detention Funding Is Increasing

		Funding Sources (in millions)		
		General Revenue	Grants and Donations Trust Fund	Total
1996-97	1,917	\$77.9	\$ 3.1	\$ 81.0
1997-98	2,165	78.6	12.6	91.2
1998-99	2,337	90.1	9.9	100.0
1999-00	2,330	94.5	10.6	105.1

Source: Department of Juvenile Justice Detention Services Approved Operating Budgets.

For Fiscal Year 2000-01, the Governor's recommended budget is \$108,665,009. This includes \$91,560,120 for secure detention, \$9,104,889 for home detention, and \$8,000,000 for fixed capital outlay.

³ Per diem costs are derived from the department's program "activity costs" based on total program expenditures, including transportation costs, divided by the total number of resident days.

⁴ Grants and donations consist primarily of federal National School Lunch funding and include some rent money paid by Dade County to the department for judges' offices.

Program Placement and Organization

The Department of Juvenile Justice is the appropriate criminal justice agency to administer detention services for juveniles. State and federal laws restrict the use of adult facilities, such as county jails or correctional facilities, for the detention of juveniles. Chapter 985, *F.S.*, stipulates that "under no circumstances shall the case manager, state attorney, or law enforcement officer authorize the detention of any youth in a jail or other facility intended or used for the detention of adults, without an order of the court."⁵ State and federal laws also specify that youth be separated by sight and sound from adults in both jail and prison settings.

Within the Department of Juvenile Justice, the Detention Program is administered by operations staff in the department's 15 districts, and the superintendent of each detention center reports to the district manager. The detention field staff are also supported by central office staff in Tallahassee.

This legislative session the department is seeking approval to reorganize. If approved, the reorganization will have a significant impact on the Detention Program. Instead of being one of many programs supervised by a district manager, detention would become one of five functional areas with an assistant secretary. The five assistant secretaries will report directly to the department secretary. Detention would be organized into three regions throughout the state, with oversight provided by a regional detention supervisor who would report to the assistant secretary of detention. These changes should increase program autonomy and accountability.

This review assesses the performance of home and secure detention and provides recommendations for improving the efficiency of the Detention Program.

⁵ Juveniles that are being adjudicated as adults may be detained in an adult jail, but housed separately from adult inmates to prohibit a child from having regular contact with incarcerated adults, including trustees. "Regular contact" means sight and sound contact.

Home Detention

Youth on home detention are released to the physical custody of their parents, guardians, or responsible adult or relative. These youth are not allowed to leave their residence without supervision unless it is for an approved reason, such as to attend school or go to a job. Department staff make periodic face-to-face and telephone contact with the youth to check on their whereabouts, determine if they are abiding by the rules of their home detention contract, and facilitate their appearance at court hearings.

Home detention can also include the use of electronic monitoring. Youth placed on electronic monitoring wear a transmitter on their ankle, and a monitoring device is connected to the telephone in their residence. The system alerts detention staff if juveniles leave their residence or tamper with the monitoring equipment. Youth on electronic monitoring represent 36% of the home detention average daily population.

Home Detention Serves All Risk Levels

Although home detention is intended for juveniles who are eligible for detention but are considered a low risk to public safety, it also serves a considerable percentage of higher-risk youth. The majority of home detention youth are transferred, rather than directly admitted. With few exceptions, the transfers to home detention are juveniles who were originally assigned to secure detention because they were considered a threat to public safety. As shown in Exhibit 2, a total of 18,586 juveniles were transferred to home detention in Fiscal Year 1998-99.⁶

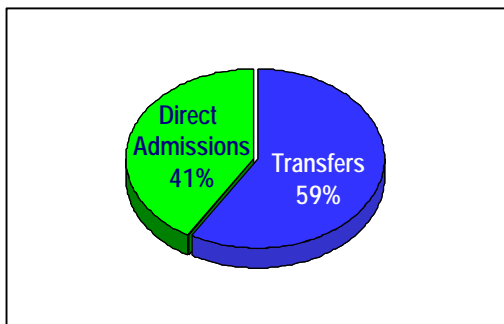
Secure detention youth are transferred to home detention due to circumstances over which the program has little control. For example, juveniles may not be held in detention for more than 21 days without an

⁶ A similar pattern of more youth being transferred than directly admitted to home detention also occurred in Fiscal Years 1996-97 and 1997-98.

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adjudicatory hearing.⁷ Judges sometimes release juveniles from secure detention to home detention if this timeframe is not met. Juveniles may also be transferred to home detention to reduce secure detention overcrowding, or to wait for a commitment facility bed to become available after they have been adjudicated and sentenced.

Exhibit 2 Most Home Detention Youth Were Transferred from Secure Detention



Source: Department of Juvenile Detention.

Juveniles on home detention who abscond, violate a home detention rule, commit a new crime, or fail to appear in court may be sent to a secure detention facility.⁸ Twenty percent of the youth placed in home detention (6,352) were sent to secure detention during Fiscal Year 1998-99.

Home Detention Performance Is Improving

The purpose of home detention is to protect public safety and ensure that juveniles are available for court hearings. Performance data for the past three fiscal years suggest that home detention has become more effective in meeting this purpose. This improvement is particularly noteworthy given the percentage of former secure detention youth in the home detention population.

⁷ Section 985.215, F.S.

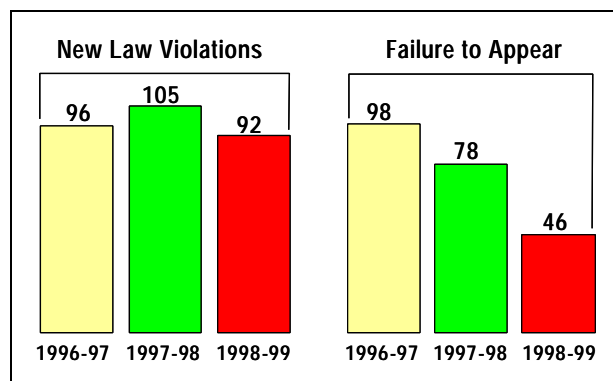
⁸ To abscond is to hide or absent oneself with the intent to avoid the legal process. A youth who is missing for 24 hours is considered to have absconded.

Outcome measures for home detention include

- the rate of juveniles returned to secure detention for committing a new law violation and
- the rate of juveniles returned for failing to appear in court.⁹

While the overall reliability of detention performance data is limited by a number of concerns, an improvement for both rates suggests increased effectiveness.¹⁰ From 1996-97 to 1998-99, the rate for juveniles who committed new law violations declined slightly. The 1998-99 rate for youth returned to secure detention for a new law violation was 92 per 100,000 resident days, which compares favorably to the approved standard of 98 youth per 100,000 resident days. In addition, during the three fiscal years the rate for juveniles who failed to appear in court declined by more than half, meeting the standard of 46 youth per 100,000 resident days. (See Exhibit 3.)

Exhibit 3 Fewer Home Detention Youth Are Being Sent to Secure Detention for New Law Violations and Failure to Appear in Court¹



¹ Per 100,000 resident days

Source: Department of Juvenile Justice.

⁹ The rate is based on the number of youth returned per 100,000 resident days.

¹⁰ According to the Department of Juvenile Justice inspector general's findings, there is a lack of data control, consistent calculations, and reporting criteria. See the Program Accountability section of this report for a more detailed explanation.

The department attributes some of this success to the use of electronic monitoring. Electronic monitoring of home detention youth has increased in recent years and is available at every detention center. Electronic monitoring enhances staff's ability to determine if juveniles are breaking home detention rules, such as leaving their residence without permission or returning late from school. Juveniles on electronic monitoring may be less likely to commit a new law violation; they represent about one-third (36%) of the home detention average daily population and account for only 3% of the youth returned to secure detention for new law violations. Similar data are not available to assess the impact of electronic monitoring on court appearances.

A third outcome measure for home detention is the rate youth are returned to secure detention for absconding from home detention. The abscond return rate has increased quite dramatically. The rate reported for Fiscal Year 1998-99 is 230 per 100,000 resident days, representing an increase of 215% in the past three years. However, this increase may not accurately reflect actual changes in program performance because the data were compiled from different sources over time.¹¹

Also, the increase in the abscond return rate may reflect a positive trend of better detection by program staff. For example, the increased use of electronic monitoring may enable the program to better identify and catch youth who leave their home without permission. This interpretation would be consistent with the decrease in the rates for home detention youth returned to secure detention because they committed new law violations or failed to appear in court. Because it is not clear whether increases or decreases in the rate are positive or negative, the department will need to study this data over time to determine how and why the performance changes.

¹¹ The 1996-97 number is based on abscond data provided by the department's Office of the Inspector General. The number for 1998-99 is based on data provided in the *Superintendent's Monthly Report*. In addition, the data may be based on different definitions of abscond over time.

Home Detention Staffing Ratio Needs to Be Revisited

The department's recommended 7:1 youth-to-staff ratio for home detention should be revisited. The ratio is based on the program's original design dating from the 1970s and has not been revised to reflect current program caseloads and conditions. Over the past 10 years, the average daily home detention population grew from 881 to 2,224 youth, and caseloads have increased accordingly. In 1998-99, home detention staff in only two of the 22 centers met the 7:1 standard; the majority of these centers had youth-to-staff ratios of 15:1 or higher.

The department recommends a ratio of 15:1 or less for the intensive supervision of youth on aftercare. The 15:1 ratio may also be appropriate for the level of supervision required for youth on home detention, especially with the enhanced surveillance afforded by electronic monitoring. Performance data suggests that caseloads that exceed a 15:1 ratio can provide effective supervision.

However, the department needs more complete information to determine the optimal staffing level for home detention workers. The department's data on home detention staffing levels are based on full-time equivalent positions and do not take into account the use of OPS workers.

We recommend that the department identify the true youth-to-staff ratio to determine actual home detention caseloads. The department should use this information with performance data to develop a more meaningful staffing benchmark and distribute staff among the centers accordingly.

Secure Detention _____

Secure detention centers are jail-like facilities operated by the department. Youth stay in detention from one day to several months; the statewide average length of stay in Fiscal Year 1998-99 was 12 days. The secure detention

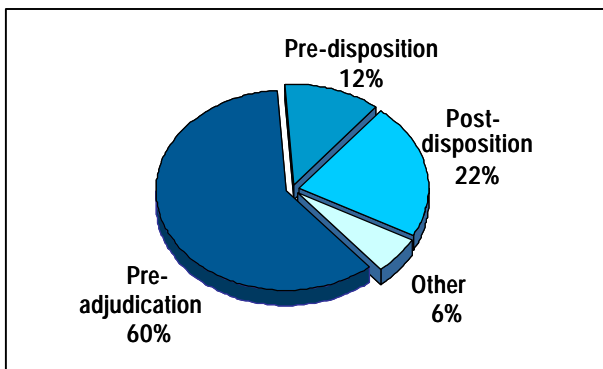
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population is very fluid, as youth are admitted and released daily.

Secure Detention Houses Youth in All Stages of the Judicial Process

Juveniles in detention are in various stages of the juvenile justice process, including waiting for trial (pre-adjudication), detained pending sentencing (pre-disposition), and sentenced but waiting for a residential commitment bed to become available (post-disposition).¹² As illustrated in Exhibit 4, two-thirds of the youth in secure detention in Fiscal Year 1998-99 were waiting for trial.

Exhibit 4
Most Youth in Secure Detention Are Waiting for Trial



Source: Department of Juvenile Justice, Secure Detention Summary of Weekly Population Reports, Fiscal Year 1998-99.

Secure Detention Overcrowding Has Declined

While Florida's secure detention centers have historically been overcrowded, the situation has markedly improved. Over-crowding peaked in Fiscal Year 1995-96 with a statewide utilization rate of 138.3%.¹³

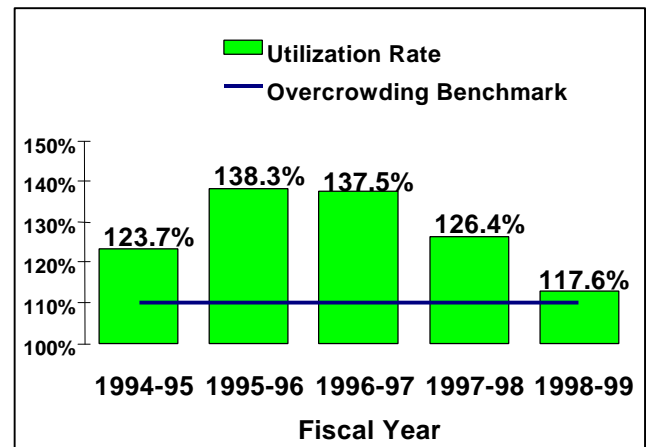
At that time, increasing numbers of youth were being sent to detention, and post-disposition youth spent extended periods in the facilities

¹² Other youth are detained for actions such as contempt of court or domestic violence.

¹³ The utilization rate is calculated by dividing the average daily population by the number of fixed beds, then multiplying by 100.

waiting for commitment beds. The wait for females and special needs youth was particularly long, often six to nine months. Since then there has been a steady decline to a 117.6% utilization rate in Fiscal Year 1998-99. (See Exhibit 5.) Despite this improvement, 50% of the facilities still have a utilization rate over 110%, which is the department's benchmark for overcrowding.

Exhibit 5
Overcrowding Has Decreased



Source: Department of Juvenile Justice.

When overcrowding occurs, whether it is facility-wide or within modules, staff lose the ability to appropriately place youth in different living units or single rooms. This can result in the need to place youth together that would normally be separated, such as young offenders with more aggressive, older youth.

Detention centers that do not have a high utilization rate still frequently experience overcrowding due to the need to separate various populations within the facility. Each detention center operates several modules within the facility. These modules are intended to separate juveniles by age, gender, aggressiveness, or type of crime committed. Regardless of the overall utilization rate, facilities report over-crowding commonly occurs within modules housing a particular type of detainee.

The Legislature and the department have taken steps to reduce overcrowding and improve secure detention conditions. The Legislature has funded new beds for both detention and commitment purposes. The department has opened three new detention facilities, built additions to six existing centers, and is planning five more centers. (See Exhibit 6.)

The department also has opened many new commitment beds, which allow juveniles to be moved from detention to commitment more rapidly. The number of commitment beds increased from 3,789 to 6,470 between 1996 and 1998.

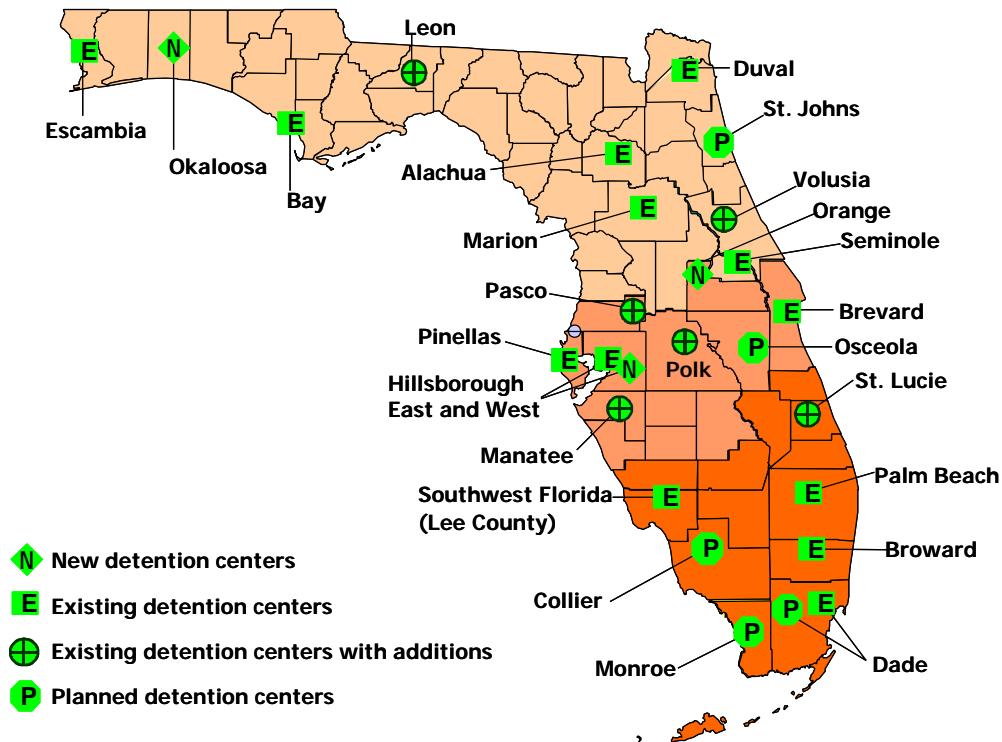
In response to legislative concerns over the length of time youth waiting for commitment spent in detention in the past, we analyzed agency data to determine the current length of stay for these youth. We found that the proportion of youth waiting for commitment was smaller than we expected, and the waiting

period was considerably less than the four to six months reported for prior years.

Detention rosters indicate that on January 13, 2000, 22% or 418 secure detention youth were waiting for a bed to become available for them in a commitment program. Up to the day of our data collection, these committed juveniles had spent an average of 38 days in detention. Juveniles waiting for Level 10 had the longest average waiting period (63 days). Females are not waiting longer than males for a bed to become available for them in a commitment program.

Legislative appropriations and the program's planning efforts have substantially reduced detention over-crowding. Whether planned detention beds will be sufficient to eliminate overcrowding will depend upon many factors, including many crime trends, judicial sentencing decisions, and legislative policy decisions concerning length of stay for youth in detention and commitment.

Exhibit 6
More Detention Beds Are Being Constructed



Source: Department of Juvenile Justice.

Secure Detention Performance Is Improving

The mission of secure detention is to provide a safe, secure environment for youth awaiting court action and to ensure public safety. Performance data for the past three years indicate that secure detention has become more effective in meeting this purpose. The overall reliability of this outcome data is limited by a number of concerns; however, it is the best information that is available at this time.¹⁴

Performance outcome measures for secure detention include

- the rate of escapes and
- the rate of youth-on-youth and youth-on-staff assaults.

The Detention Program met or exceeded its goals for these measures in Fiscal Year 1998-99, and trends indicate that program performance is improving.

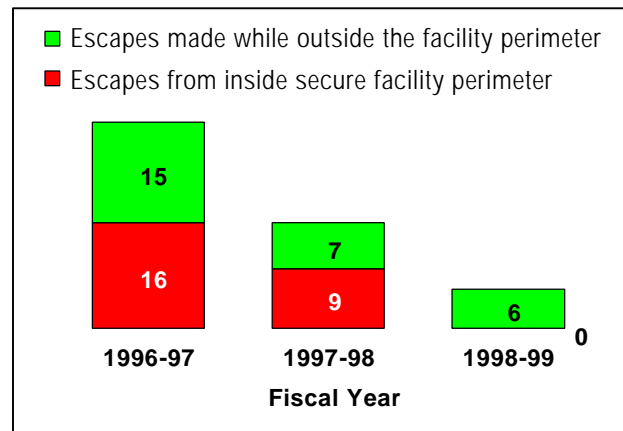
The rate of escapes from secure detention facilities was 0.8 per 100,000 resident days, significantly less than the approved standard of 3.5. The actual number of escapes showed a considerable reduction from the previous year. (See Exhibit 7.) During the past three fiscal years, the department upgraded detention facility security in a number of ways. It established a security taskforce, implemented a security audits program and increased security-related staff training. The department also increased funding for facility repairs and enhancements such as security cameras and fencing.

The program also exceeded its goal to reduce the rate per 100,000 resident days of youth-on-youth assaults and met the approved standard regarding the rate of youth-on-staff assaults. Batteries committed by youth on other youth have been declining over the past several years

¹⁴ According to the Department of Juvenile Justice inspector general's findings, there is a lack of data control, consistent calculations, and reporting criteria. See the Program Accountability section of this report for a more detailed explanation.

from a rate of 136 incidents in Fiscal Year 1996-97 to 99 in Fiscal Year 1998-99. During the same period the rate of youth-on-staff assaults also declined by a smaller margin (from 24 to 22). According to the department, the program was able to attain its goals due to efforts to improve security and staff training to diffuse potentially dangerous situations.

Exhibit 7
Reduced Number of Escapes
Indicates Improved Security



Source: Department of Juvenile Justice.

The number of suicides and verified abuse and neglect incidents are two additional important measures of program effectiveness. These indicators reflect whether secure detention is meeting its statutory responsibility to provide a safe, secure environment for detained juveniles. Since the department took over the detention program in 1994, there have been no suicides reported in secure detention.

According to the Department of Children and Families, which administers the Florida Abuse Hotline, the number of verified complaints for secure detention has remained fairly consistent. For the past three years there were 24, 22, and 29 verified cases of abuse or neglect. The complaints included physical abuse such as a slap on the face and not receiving medical attention for a fractured hand. While any cases are unacceptable, the incidents are few and translate to four incidents per 100,000 resident

days in Fiscal Year 1998-99 and three incidents for the previous two years.

Staffing Practices Are Inefficient

Determining the security and operational needs of each facility is essential for identifying appropriate staffing patterns. We found that outdated staffing patterns and unusually high turnover limit the efficiency of secure detention and contribute to high overtime and training costs.

The department does not follow a security-based, corrections model of identifying critical and support positions to determine the number of staff needed at each center for each shift. Instead, the department uses a caseload-type ratio of 8:1 youth-to-staff during the day and 10:1 at night to staff the detention centers. This staffing ratio is not practical for identifying and responding to detention program needs.

Job responsibilities frequently take detention staff from the building, leaving a reduced number of care workers to supervise youth. Of the additional tasks that detention care workers have to perform, transportation is the most demanding and time-consuming activity. Large numbers of detention youth are moved each day, routinely reducing the youth-to-staff ratio at the detention centers. For example, detention care workers transport youth to court, pick youth up from assessment centers, and deliver youth to commitment programs, all often in other counties or other parts of the state.

The youth-to-staff ratio is frequently further reduced because staff often also fulfill responsibilities such as kitchen and laundry duty, and clerical and procurement jobs. While staff are doing these jobs they are not able to supervise youth "on the floor." These situational shortages are compounded by staff being absent from the job due to sick leave, family emergencies, training, and worker's comp injuries. According to department staff, this situation is very stressful to detention workers.

The detention program's turnover rate for detention care workers is among the 10 highest in the entire state personnel system. While separation from state government statewide was 13%, detention care workers left the state work force at the rate of 26% in 1998.¹⁵

As a result of situational shortages and vacancies due to high turnover, most detention centers experience extensive overtime. In Fiscal Year 1998-99, the detention centers reported using 164,830 hours of staff overtime. Based on the minimum hourly wage of \$10.30 for detention care workers, we estimate the department incurred a minimum of \$2.5 million in overtime expenses.

High turnover is also a source of high staff training costs. To prepare detention care workers for their jobs, the department sends new employees to a seven-week course conducted at one of five department academies. Staff must then pass a written exam to become certified detention care workers for the department. According to department records, 268 new detention care staff were trained in Fiscal Year 1998-99. The cost for each trainee was \$7,508.94, for a total cost of \$2,012,396.¹⁶ Particularly in light of these training costs, it does not appear to be efficient to use detention care workers for tasks such as kitchen and laundry work that does not involve supervising youth.

The department secretary has designated a task force on detention that has been developing a plan to address these staffing issues. We recommend that the department take the following actions.

- Develop a critical post-staffing pattern, similar to those used by prisons, for each detention facility. This staffing pattern should take into account each facility's building design and use of technology.

¹⁵ These numbers maybe under-reported, because only separations from state jobs are included in the calculation. Accepting another job in the Department of Juvenile Justice or transferring to another agency is not included in this count.

¹⁶ The cost for each trainee included salary and benefits for seven weeks, housing, food, travel, and the cost of classrooms, instructors, and supplies.

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- Identify jobs, such as kitchen and laundry work, that could be done by less expensive staff who would not be responsible for supervising youth.
- Use technology when possible to reduce staffing needs.
- Apply these elements to developing the optimal distribution of secure detention staff throughout the state.

Program Accountability —

The detention program's outcome measures directly address the program's primary purpose and have the potential to provide relevant and useful information to evaluate program effectiveness. However, the department's inspector general has identified a number of concerns regarding the accuracy and consistency of the performance measure data, which come primarily from reports that are manually prepared at each detention center.

In the Juvenile Detention Program 2000-01 Legislative Budget Request, the inspector general recommends that the department

- develop and implement a data control and reporting system to ensure the reliability of the reported performance measures;
- implement supervisory reviews;
- develop written procedures on implementing, testing and periodically reviewing the data control and reporting system that ensures accuracy, consistency, and completeness of reported performance measures; and
- develop a database system that would allow for the daily input of data for performance measures and allow headquarter and district management to review reported measures on demand.

The department is in the process of implementing the Juvenile Justice Information System (JJIS). Eventually, detention program staff will be able to enter information directly into the system, eliminating reliance on manual

reports and reducing the potential for human error. The department has also established a data integrity work group. The group is developing and field-testing standards and guidelines for JJIS data entry. However, it is not known when the department will be able to rely completely on JJIS for program performance data.

The department has neither implemented the inspector general's recommendations for improving the reliability of data currently collected in manual reports nor addressed the need for data controls, such as supervisory checks, that will still be needed when JJIS becomes fully operational. We recommend that the department coordinate the gradual implementation of JJIS with more immediate measures to improve the accuracy and consistency of performance data.

Conclusions and Recommendations —

The primary purpose of detention is to ensure public safety while providing a safe and humane environment for juveniles who are awaiting legal action. Youth that are considered a public safety risk are sent to a secure detention center, while those who present a lower degree of risk are released to home detention. There is considerable fluidity between these populations.

Home Detention

The effectiveness of home detention has improved, which is particularly noteworthy given that last year 59% of youth in home detention were transfers from secure detention. The return rate for juveniles who committed new crimes declined slightly and the return rate for juveniles who failed to appear in court was cut by more than half. The department attributes some of this success to increased use of electronic monitoring.

The department's recommended 7:1 youth-to-staff ratio is outdated and does not reflect current caseloads or conditions. In addition, the department does not take into account

other staff that supervise home detention youth, so it does not track the true caseload of detention care workers. The department recommends a 15:1 or less ratio for the intensive supervision of youth on aftercare, and this may also be an appropriate level of supervision for youth on home detention.

We recommend that the department

- identify the true youth-to-staff ratio to determine actual home detention caseloads. The department should use this information with performance data to develop a more meaningful staffing benchmark, and distribute staff among the centers accordingly.

Secure Detention

Overcrowding, which has been a concern for secure detention for many years, has markedly decreased, although half the centers remain over-utilized. Legislative funding of detention and commitment beds has relieved the situation.

Secure detention performance has improved. The rate of escapes was significantly reduced, as was the rate of youth-on-youth assaults. A small decrease in the youth-on-staff assault rate also occurred.

Determining the security needs of each facility is essential for identifying appropriate staffing patterns. However, the department does not follow a security-based, corrections model of identifying critical and support positions to determine the number of staff needed at each center for each shift. Instead, the department uses a caseload-type youth-to-staff ratio that is not practical for identifying and responding to detention program needs. Most detention centers experience extensive overtime, and the turnover rate is among the highest in state government. This turnover is a source of high staff training costs.

We recommend that the department take the steps noted below to improve secure detention.

- Develop a critical post-staffing pattern, similar to those used by prisons, for each secure detention facility. This staffing pattern should take into account each facility's building design and use of technology.
- Identify jobs, such as kitchen and laundry work, that could be done by less expensive staff who would not be responsible for supervising youth.
- Use technology when possible to reduce staffing needs.
- Apply these elements to develop an optimal distribution of secure detention staff throughout the state.

Accountability

To provide accurate and consistent performance measurement data, the department should

- develop and implement a data control and reporting system;
- implement supervisory reviews of the data;
- develop written procedures for data collection and verification; and
- complete implementation of the juvenile justice information system.

For agency response see Appendix B on page 15.

Appendix A

Statutory Requirements for Program Evaluations and Justification Reviews

Section 11.513(3), *F.S.*, provides that OPPAGA Program Evaluation and Justification Reviews shall address nine issue areas. Our conclusions on these issues as they relate to the Detention Program are summarized below.

Table A-1
Summary of the Program Evaluation and Justification Review of the Detention Program

Issue	
The identifiable cost of the program	Total program operating budgets, including the fixed capital outlay, have increased for the past four years. The program is funded primarily through general revenue and receives some grants and donations trust funds. ¹⁷ The approved operating budget for Fiscal Year 1999-00 with fixed capital outlay is \$105.1 million.
The specific purpose of the program, as well as the specific public benefit derived therefrom	The primary purpose of detention is to ensure public safety while providing a short-term physically restrictive or closely supervised, safe and humane environment for juveniles who are detained pending legal action. The public benefit is enhanced safety for the public and the detention of youth to ensure their appearance in court.
Progress towards achieving the outputs and outcomes associated with the program	<p>The performance of home detention has improved. The return rate for juveniles who committed new crimes declined slightly and the return rate for juveniles who failed to appear in court was cut by more than half. The number of youth absconding from home detention who are sent to secure detention has increased, but this may be a positive trend, as it may indicate increased detection and response.</p> <p>Secure detention performance has also improved. The rate of escapes was significantly reduced, and the rates of youth-on-youth and youth-on-staff assaults decreased.</p>
An explanation of circumstances contributing to the state agency's ability to achieve, not achieve, or exceed its projected outputs and outcomes, as defined in s. 216.011, <i>F.S.</i> , associated with the program	<p>Increased use of electronic monitoring contributed to improvements in home detention performance. Electronic monitoring enhances staff's ability to determine if juveniles are breaking home detention rules, such as leaving their residences without permission or returning late from school. Juveniles on electronic monitoring may be less likely to commit a new law violation; they represent about one-third (36%) of the home detention population and account for only 3% of the youth returned to secure detention for new law violations. Although the department does not collect data to assess the impact of electronic monitoring on youth's failure to appear in court, it is reasonable to assume that the closer supervision electronic monitoring affords would reduce the number of youth who do fail to appear.</p> <p>Over the past three fiscal years, the department upgraded detention facility security in a number of ways. Over this time period, the department established a security taskforce, implemented a security audits program and increased security-related staff training. The department also increased funding for facility repairs and enhancements such as security cameras and fencing. In 1997-98 the department started implementing a behavior management system and small group discussion program on behavior-related topics, such as anger management. The department also upgraded training for detention care workers, including "use of force" in restraining detainees.</p>

¹⁷ Grants and donations consist primarily of federal National School Lunch funding and include some rent money paid by Dade County to the department for judges' offices.

Issue	
<p>Alternative placement or courses of action that would result in administering the program more efficiently and effectively</p>	<p>The Department of Juvenile Justice is the appropriate agency to administer detention services for juveniles. State and federal law restrict the use of adult facilities, such as county jails or correctional facilities, for the detention of juveniles. Program activities that pertain to restraining and supervising the movement of juveniles are clearly related to the mission of the department to reduce the rate of juvenile crime.</p> <p>The department contracts with private providers for a number of detention services, such as electronic monitoring and health and mental health services. We explored whether detention services could be further privatized. Private vendors have not been active in the area of juvenile detention in Florida or any other state. Two national companies that provide adult detention in other states indicated that they would be interested in providing juvenile detention services in Florida if the centers under contract were 100 beds or larger; they told us that smaller facilities would not be sufficiently profitable to bid on. Currently, four Florida secure detention centers are over 100 beds. We also spoke with representatives of companies that provide juvenile commitment services in Florida. One representative indicated that the current \$118 per diem rate was too low for them to be interested in providing detention services. Another stated that his company was interested in rehabilitating youth in commitment programs but not interested in running detention centers.</p> <p>Staffing issues limit the efficiency of detention services. Home detention's 7:1 youth-to-staff ratio has significant limitations as a staffing standard and should be revisited. The effectiveness of secure detention could be improved by addressing staffing patterns and high overtime, turnover, and training costs. We recommend the options below.</p> <p><i>Home Detention</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Identify the true youth-to-staff ratio to determine actual home detention caseloads. The department should use this information with performance data to develop a more meaningful staffing benchmark, and distribute staff among the centers accordingly. <p><i>Secure Detention</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Develop a critical post-staffing pattern, similar to those used by prisons, for each secure detention facility. This staffing pattern should take into account each facility's building design and use of technology. Identify jobs, such as kitchen and laundry work, that could be done by less expensive staff who would not be responsible for supervising youth. Use technology when possible to reduce staffing needs. Apply these elements to develop an optimal distribution of secure detention staff throughout the state.
<p>The consequences of discontinuing the program</p>	<p>If the department's Detention Program were disbanded and its responsibilities assigned to local law enforcement agencies, the public would lose expertise and consistency in supervising juveniles. Department oversight of detention centers helps to ensure that interpretation and enforcement of juvenile laws are consistent statewide.</p>
<p>Determination as to public policy, which may include recommendations as to whether it would be sound public policy to continue or discontinue funding the program, either in whole or in part</p>	<p>The program removes juveniles who pose a risk to public safety from the community and supervises youth on home detention to ensure that they appear for court proceedings. Discontinuation of the program would have a negative impact on public safety and the judicial process.</p>

Justification Review

Issue	
<p>Whether the information reported pursuant to s. 216.03(5), <i>F.S.</i>, has relevance and utility for the evaluation of the program</p>	<p>The detention program's outcome measures directly address the program's primary purpose: to provide services that provide a safe and humane environment for youth in secure detention, protect the community, and ensure the appearance of detained juveniles for court proceedings. The measures have the potential to provide relevant and useful information to evaluate the program's effectiveness in fulfilling its purpose. However, a number of data reliability concerns limit the measures' overall utility.</p> <p>Pursuant to law, the department's inspector general assessed the validity and reliability of the program's measures. The inspector general identified a number of concerns regarding the accuracy and consistency of the performance measure data. The primary source of data for the performance measures are reports that are manually prepared by detention center staff and submitted to the department's Bureau of Research and Data. The inspector general noted inconsistencies in the way measures were defined and calculated by different detention centers. The inspector general also found that the department had not established adequate data controls and procedures to reduce the likelihood of data inaccuracies due to human error.</p> <p>In the Juvenile Detention Program 2000-01 Legislative Budget Request, the inspector general recommends that the department</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• develop and implement a data control and reporting system to ensure the reliability of the reported performance measures;• implement supervisory reviews by which the reviewer initials and dates each report before release;• develop written procedures on implementing, testing and periodically reviewing the data control and reporting system that ensures accuracy, consistency, and completeness of reported performance measures; and• develop a database system that would allow for the daily input of data for performance measures and allow headquarter and district management to review reported measures on demand.
<p>Whether state agency management has established control systems sufficient to ensure that performance data are maintained and supported by state agency records and accurately presented in state agency performance reports</p>	<p>The department has not yet established control systems sufficient to ensure the reliability and accuracy of detention program performance data. The department is in the process of implementing the Juvenile Justice Information System (JJIS). Eventually, detention program staff will be able to enter information directly into the system, eliminating reliance on manual reports. At this time, however, the department relies on manual reports for the bulk of the program's performance data. It is not known when the department will be able to rely fully on JJIS for detention performance data.</p> <p>A recently formed data integrity workgroup is in the process of developing, field-testing, and implementing JJIS operating procedures. However, the department has not fully implemented the inspector general's recommendations. In particular, the department has not implemented supervisory reviews and or developed written procedures for implementing and testing data controls to ensure data accuracy and consistency.</p>

Appendix B

Agency Response

In accordance with the provisions of s. 11.45(7)(d), *F.S.*, a draft of our report was submitted to the Secretary of the Department of Juvenile Justice for his review and response. The secretary's written response follows.



STATE OF FLORIDA
DEPARTMENT OF JUVENILE JUSTICE

April 4, 2000

The Honorable John W. Turcotte, Director
Office of Program Policy Analysis
And Government Accountability
111 West Madison Street, Room 806
Tallahassee, Florida 32399-1400

Re: Draft Report: *Justification Review - Juvenile Detention Program's Performance Improved; Staffing Needs to be Revisited*

Dear Mr. Turcotte:

Thank you for providing the Florida Department of Juvenile Justice an extension on responding to your office's request. Pursuant to section 11.45 (7)(d), Florida Statutes, the department's response to preliminary findings and recommendations of the above referenced draft report is enclosed.

We appreciate your efforts in providing recommendations for improvement of the Juvenile Detention program and operations of the department. Should you have any questions or concerns regarding this response, please do not hesitate to contact me at **(850) 921-0904**.

Cordially,

W. G. "Bill" Bankhead
Secretary

WBB/PST/os
Enclosure

cc: Francisco Alarcon, Deputy Secretary
George Hinchliffe, Assistant Secretary for Program and Planning
Perry S. Turner, Inspector General
Michael Wallace, Division Director, Detention and Commitment Programs

Jeb Bush, Governor

**Florida Department of Juvenile Justice
Response to Draft Findings of OPPAGA's Justification Review of the
Department's Juvenile Detention Program's Performance**

The Department will undergo reorganization in the near future, pending legislative approval. One objective of the reorganization effort is to realign functional areas for the development of policy and operational procedures. Reorganization of the department will increase efficiency, and ensure and enhance accountability and responsibility.

Finding 1

A subset of the reorganization process is to determine staffing benchmarks based on realistic caseloads. Through various workgroups and committees, the Department is actively developing data and procedures, while performing analyses that will lead to better staffing with appropriate caseloads in home detention and other functional areas as well.

Finding 2

The Department has established a workgroup to develop a methodology for determining appropriate staffing patterns in all its detention centers. In addition to the workgroup, the department is addressing staffing patterns in various other ways. One way is to ensure newly constructed facilities incorporate technology and design features to improve security while minimizing staffing. The implementation of a statewide transportation system has begun to have a significant impact on reducing the diversion of direct care staff. Best practices for optimum staff utilization are continually shared among facilities statewide. The department continues to request additional funding to properly support food service, maintenance and other non-direct care functions that otherwise require direct staff diversions.

Finding 3

The Juvenile Justice Information System (JJIS) is being utilized statewide, although not yet to its fullest potential. Data Integrity Officers, recently established in each district, help insure the accuracy of data entering the system. Complete implementation of the system by July 2000 will eliminate most manual reports. The completed system incorporates such areas as supervisory reviews, verification, and a responsive database.

4/3/00

OPPAGA provides objective, independent, professional analyses of state policies and services to assist the Florida Legislature in decision making, to ensure government accountability, and to recommend the best use of public resources. This project was conducted in accordance with applicable evaluation standards. Copies of this report in print or alternate accessible format may be obtained by telephone (850/488-0021 or 800/531-2477), by FAX (850/487-3804), in person, or by mail (OPPAGA Report Production, Claude Pepper Building, Room 312, 111 W. Madison St., Tallahassee, FL 32399-1475).

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