

CHAPTER 12

SELF-REPORT RESEARCH

12.1 Introduction

Integral to the Juvenile Justice Educational Enhancement Program's (JJEPP) multiple functions is its best education practices evaluation research. The research described in this chapter is focused on validating whether better education programs, as measured by annual quality assurance (QA) scores, are facilitating greater successful community reintegration. Prior research conducted by JJEPP on best education practices has shown that those "promising education practices" identified in the research literature are more prevalent in juvenile justice educational programs with higher QA review scores. Consequently, a major function of JJEPP is to conduct evaluation research to determine whether higher quality performing educational programs result in better community reintegration of youths who leave these programs and return to their respective home communities. One approach taken by JJEPP to gathering such information has been the institution of a self-report study.

Using annual QA scores, JJEPP selected high-performing and low-performing programs. Researchers tracked youths released from these programs in the fiscal year 2000/2001 for a period of one-year after their release and utilized a telephone survey administered to the students and their guardians to obtain the self-reported data. Out of the 1213 students in the sample, 185 of their guardians were interviewed at six months and 313 guardians at 12 months. These surveys provided information regarding the student's behavior since release from the facility, the student's school performance, peer groups, involvement in community activities, the student's employment history, family relations, and delinquent activity.

The study further obtained 105 student interviews at six months and 166 at 12 months, providing data about the educational services they received in the program, the aftercare services after release, and how each influenced or affected current school performance, job opportunities, and involvement in the community. The youths also were asked about their perceptions of their school performance, their employment status, and job descriptions, as well as their relationships with family members and friends. Additionally, the interviews obtained information from the students concerning their involvement in community and delinquent activities. Attempts were made to contact half of the population at six months after release and the entire sample at 12 months after release.

These self-report data will be used to determine if there is a relationship between quality juvenile justice education resulting in measurable academic gains and community reintegration and to determine differences in outcomes between high-performing and low-performing programs. Program-level data will be used to evaluate these programs.

This chapter is comprised of four subsequent sections and provides a detailed description of the research methods involved in our current statewide study of educational program quality and official and self report community reintegration measures. Section 12.2 describes the project generally and the methods involved in conducting the study, including the program selection process, program descriptions, student selection, developing and administering the survey instruments, and receiving necessary approval. Section 12.3 describes data analysis and presents the study's results. Section 12.4 concludes the chapter with a summary discussion.

12.2 Self-Report Research Methods

Program Selection

In the current study, 12 pairs of programs were matched on several key criteria, many of which have been examined individually in other parts of this report. These matching factors include QA scores, security level/type of facility, provider status (public, private for-profit and private not-for profit), gender served by the program (male, female, or combined) and facility size. QA score was the primary focus because this project intended to match a high scoring program with a low scoring program to allow for greater quality differences between educational programs. Using this method, the researchers were able to obtain a reasonable representation of the different types of facilities throughout the state.

The project began with a list of each of the 175 commitment programs JJEEP reviewed in 2000. The most recent QA score for each program was used. The study, therefore, relied primarily upon scores from 2000 as the selection process began in March 2001, and the 2001 QA review cycle began in February. The programs were arranged in descending order by QA score where a score of 5.50 was considered "average." The programs with scores between 5.00 and 6.00, therefore, were eliminated so that only "above average" and "below average" programs would remain.

The programs were then split into two lists: above average (scores greater than or equal to 6.00 included 68 programs) and below average (scores below 5.00 included 55 programs). Fifty-two (52) programs were cut from the original list. Within the two groups, the programs were ordered by level and information about provider status, gender, and facility size was included. An attempt was made to match a high scoring program with a low scoring program whose provider status, gender served, and facility size were the same or as closely matched as possible. From these lists 24 programs—the 12 matched pairs—were selected.

Program Information

The 2000 QA reports on the 24 programs were reviewed to examine the programs in full detail and to identify anomalies and other distinguishing information. Once the programs were contacted, it was discovered that several programs had closed or changed providers. Pinellas Juvenile Justice Day Treatment, Children and Adolescent Treatment Services (CATS), and Boy's Ranch Group Treatment Home had closed, but they were open for the entire release period used, fiscal year 2000-2001, so they were retained in the study. Charter

Pinellas Treatment Center Level Six and Level Eight changed providers at the beginning of fiscal year 2000/2001. All youths in these facilities were released or transferred by October 1, 2000; therefore, the list of students from those programs reflects students released between July 1, 2000, and October 1, 2000. To have more comparable populations between Hastings Youth Academy, which houses moderate-risk and high-risk offenders, and Dozier School for Boys, which house only high-risk, the moderate-risk youths from Hastings were removed from the sample. Additionally, one of the matched pairs, Stewart Marchman Transitions Day Treatment and Pinellas Juvenile Justice Day Treatment, was removed due to an inability to obtain sufficient information from either of the programs or the Juvenile Justice Information System (JJIS) to conduct a satisfactory analysis on these programs. Table 12.2-1 provides an overview of the final 22 programs included in the study.

Table 12.2-1: Program Descriptions

JJEEP Program Name	QA score	Level	Education Provider Profit Status	Gender	Maximum Capacity
Palm Beach Marine Institute	2.72	Day Treatment	Not for Profit	Combined	30
Eckerd Leadership Program	6.67	Day Treatment	Not for Profit	Combined	30
Children and Adolescent Treatment Services – CATS	3.72	Low	Not for Profit	Female	12
Sheriffs Teach Adolescent Responsibility (STAR)	6.78	Low	Not for Profit	Female	24
Boys Ranch Group Treatment Home	4.78	Low	Public	Male	8
ACTS Group Treatment Home I and II	6.94	Low	Public	Male	16
NAFI Hendry Youth Development Academy	3.17	Moderate	Not for Profit	Male	32
Crossroads Wilderness Institute	6.94	Moderate	Not for Profit	Male	35
Blackwater Career Development Center	2.61	Moderate	Public	Male	25
Pensacola Boy's Base	6.78	Moderate	Public	Male	28
Deborah's Way	3.50	Moderate	Public	Female	46
Charter Pinellas Treatment Center – Level 6	7.29	Moderate	Public	Female	18
Bay Behavioral HOPE Program	2.72	Moderate	For Profit	Female	17
Camp E-Nini-Hassee	6.11	Moderate	Not for Profit	Female	60
Hastings Youth Academy	3.06	High	Public	Male	185
Dozier School for Boys	7.00	High	Public	Male	193
Vernon Place	4.89	High	Public	Female	40
Charter Pinellas Treatment Center – Level 8	6.72	High	Public	Female	96
Polk Youth Development Center	4.11	High	For Profit	Male	350
Eckerd Youth Development Center	Deemed	High	Public	Male	143
Okeechobee Juvenile Offender Correction Center	4.83	High & Maximum	Public	Male	96
Jackson Juvenile Offender Correction Center	6.06	High & Maximum	Public	Male	96

Student Selection

Each of the 22 programs was contacted and asked to submit information on all students who exited the program between July 1, 2000, and June 30, 2001. This included demographic

information, entry date, exit date, name of county prior to entering facility, name of the county released to upon exit, home phone number, name(s) of parent(s) or legal guardian(s), and successful completion of program (yes, no), and if no, the reason. As a crosscheck on the lists obtained from the programs, JJEPP obtained a list of students released from the 22 programs from the JJIS provided by the Department of Juvenile Justice (DJJ).

In July 2001, JJEPP began selecting the sample of students. The sample began with all students released in fiscal year 2000-2001 from each of the 22 programs. This brought the sample size to approximately 1600; however, due to the high number of releases from two of the large programs, only a 50% sample of students from Polk Youth Development Center and Eckerd Youth Development Center was used. Moreover, 40 Camp E-Nini-Hassee girls were identified as non-DJJ students and, thus, were excluded from the sample. Finally, students were not included in the sample if they had not actually been released to the community during the specified time period according to DJJ official data. Examples of such removals included students transferred directly to other programs, students released only for twenty-four hour medical treatment, and students who are now deceased.

After making these exclusions, the final sample consisted of 1,213 students who were released from the 22 programs to the community between July 1, 2000 and June 30, 2001. For all students (500) released between January 1, 2001 and June 30, 2001, JJEPP attempted to conduct an interview six months after their release date and 12 months after their release date. Those students (713) released between July 1, 2000, and December 31, 2000, were interviewed only at 12 months post-release.

Survey Development

After making revisions based on pre-tests, the study established the research survey on April 27, 2001. The survey and informed consent forms were submitted to the Florida State University Human Subjects Committee (HSC) and approved in May 2001. After receiving approval, the survey was further reviewed, and a section of delinquency questions was added to the student survey, requiring a re-review by the HSC. JJEPP received approval on the changes in June 2001.

To obtain information from the juvenile justice facilities, JJEPP needed approval from DJJ. An official letter from Florida's Department of Education (DOE) Commissioner Charlie Crist and DJJ Secretary William Bankhead gave JJEPP permission to obtain information from the programs and through the Juvenile Justice Information System (JJIS) on the students in the study.

Once the survey began to be administered, JJEPP encountered issues that needed to be resolved. As parents were interviewed, it was discovered that some students had been committed to another juvenile justice facility since release from the program in the study. To address this, JJEPP began using a revised survey on September 13, 2001, that included six additional questions added to the beginning of the parent survey and five questions added to the beginning of the student survey to determine if the student had been in any other commitment programs and to determine how long they had been in the community. JJEPP

used this information to determine a minimum amount of time a student must be in the community to be included in the analysis.

On October 10, 2001, JJEEP began administering a revised student survey that included improved wording on the delinquency questions developed in an effort to more readily elicit responses. In January 2002, a final revision was made to the parent survey adding questions concerning the student's involvement in community activities, employment history, peer and family relations, and delinquent activity. This revision was made due to the greater success in contacting parents than students and, thus, it was important to obtain more information from parents in the event that the students could not be contacted. The final student and original parent survey instruments can be found in JJEEP's 2001 Annual Report, Appendix H. The final parent survey instrument can be found in Appendix I of this report.

Administering the Survey

JJEEP began administering the survey at the end of July 2001 rather than the anticipated start date of July 1. Because of the late start and a shortage of interviewers, it was decided not to make any of the planned July calls to students who exited from Charter Pinellas Level Eight, Eckerd Youth Development Center, Hastings Youth Academy, and Polk Youth Development Center. These four programs had a large number of students released in fiscal year 2000-2001, and JJEEP assumed it would have a sufficient number of interview completions even without the students released in July. In October, additional interviewers were hired, and a calling protocol was developed to increase consistency among the callers.

During the administration of the survey, additional concerns developed that centered on locating and interviewing the youths. It was found that numerous unsuccessful calls were made to a substantial number of students. One remedy was to leave a message for respondents after 15 unsuccessful attempts to reach them, which was started at the end of October. As of February 2002, the callers began leaving messages for respondents on the first attempted contact. Another solution was to stop trying to contact youths for a six-month follow-up after two months of unsuccessful attempts. In other words, it was decided that JJEEP would try to contact youths for a "six-month" follow-up between six and eight months after their release date. JJEEP decided on a four-month calling period beyond the 12-month release dates. This system was started on December 4, 2001. A third solution was to implement a system for obtaining the most current phone numbers for the youths, whereby JJEEP would begin contacting juvenile probation officers (JPOs). As difficulties contacting JPOs and/or receiving up-to-date information on the students from the JPOs surfaced, the research team began utilizing 411 in an attempt to obtain a current phone number for the students and their parents. This strategy began in February 2002. Interviews continued until one-year follow-ups had been completed by November 1, 2002.

12.3 Data Analysis and Results

In this study, JJEEP wanted to measure whether youths were successfully reintegrated into the community after release from a juvenile justice program and whether programs with better education programs had higher rates of success. Such an approach raised two

important questions. First, how is successful community reintegration measured? Second, do the indicators representing this concept actually capture “success”?

While it was imperative that characteristics of incarcerated youths, such as learning, emotional, and behavioral disabilities, and academic performance levels be further established, it was likewise important to integrate the current understanding of these characteristics into the ways in which JJEEP evaluates education programs. Very little research has been done in the area of juvenile justice program evaluation, and virtually no research has been conducted on the educational programs of these institutions. The research that has been conducted primarily uses recidivism as the basic outcome to evaluate the program. JJEEP sought to move beyond these measures while using some of the same traditional measures of recidivism and incorporate assessments of successful return to school, grade retention, job acquisition, emotional and behavioral change, disciplinary infractions, improved relationships, and other measures that reflect increased bonding and attachment to conventional institutions.

The nature and extent of the youths’ successes, therefore, were examined in several different areas: education, employment, family, relationships, community activities, and delinquent behaviors. Each of these outcomes was measured in numerous ways. Because of the higher prevalence of learning disabilities and academic deficiencies among juvenile justice populations, conventional standards of success were not appropriate. Since juveniles who are involved in delinquent activities are more likely than peers their age to be absent from school and disconnected with the academic process, simply returning to school upon release from a juvenile justice facility was considered a success. Fewer absences, less frequent disciplinary infractions, and lower grade retention also were taken to be additional signs of success. Successes in the area of employment included obtaining a job, retaining a job, and receiving vocational training. Improved relationships with family members, spending less time with delinquent friends, and greater involvement in community activities were also indicators of success. Additionally, less involvement in delinquent activities was considered a success.

The current analysis examines these community reintegration data at the program level, comparing the summed results of students from the high-scoring programs with those students from the low-scoring programs. In total, the project attempted to contact 500 students and 500 guardians six months after release. In addition, JJEEP attempted to contact 713 students and 713 guardians 12 months after release. These data, as well as the number and percentage of successful contacts, are shown in Table 12.3-1. Please note that there is some overlap between the six-month and 12-month respondents, as some guardians and students completed surveys at both time-periods.

JJEEP successfully contacted 185 guardians (37%) and 105 students (21%) at six months and 313 guardians (26%) and 166 students (14%) at 12 months. A total of 3,426 contacts were attempted, including contacts to both students and guardians at the six and 12 month time periods.¹ Of those 3,426 attempted contacts, 22% resulted in actual interviews.

¹ The number 3,426 is misleading in that it refers to people that researchers attempted to contact but it double counts the 500 students and guardians in the six-month sample. These 500 cases are added to the new 723 cases used from the 12-month sample making a total of 1,213 potential contacts at the 12-month period. There are

Table 12.3-1: Survey Completion Results

	Completions		Non-Completions		Total N	Total %
	N	Percentage	N	Percentage		
Guardian 6-Month	185	37%	315	63%	500	100%
Student 6-Month	105	21%	395	79%	500	100%
Guardian 12-Month	313	26%	900	74%	1213	100%
Student 12-Month	166	14%	1047	86%	1213	100%
Total	769	22%	2657	78%	3426	100%

As seen in Table 12.3-2, there was no significant difference in the number of surveys obtained from students from high-scoring versus low-scoring programs. For example, seven percent of the guardians from low scoring programs were interviewed at six months versus eight percent of those from low scoring programs. Likewise, four percent of the students from low scoring programs and four percent of the students from high scoring programs were surveyed at six months. These results show that the low and high scoring QA programs have approximately the same response rate so any observed differences between these groups are not a function of differential response rates. It is important to note that this analysis includes only the survey data that was available to be coded and entered into JJEEP’s Longitudinal Survey Database by December 30, 2002.

Table 12.3-2: Completions by High-Scoring and Low-Scoring Programs

	Guardian 6-month	Student 6-month	Guardian 12-month	Student 12-month
Low Scoring Program	88 (18%)	51 (10%)	141 (12%)	76 (6%)
High Scoring Program	97 (19%)	54 (11%)	171 (14%)	90 (7%)
Total	185	105	313	166

The preliminary analysis of the survey results can be seen in Tables 12.3-3 through 12.3-7. These results are the percentages of the respondents answering in the affirmative to the question posed by the researcher. These percentages are based upon valid guardian and student responses to survey questions and exclude the following possible responses: don’t know, not applicable, and refusal.

Table 12.3-3 shows the association between low and high QA programs and their community relationships after release from a juvenile justice program. There does not appear to be a clear difference between students from low scoring programs and high scoring programs when examining successful reintegration based upon family and peer relationships upon release from the commitment facility. Most of the differences that exist at the six-month contact were not as great at the 12-month contact. For example, where 61% of the guardians

actually 2,426 people included (1,213 student and 1,213 guardians) in the sample, but attempts were made at two different time periods to contact the 500 students and 500 guardians selected for the six month period, thus the total of 3,426 attempted contacts.

from low scoring programs and 55% of guardians from high scoring programs reported improved relationships with their children at six months, at 12 months the figures are 59% and 57%. It is interesting that a larger percentage of guardians of children released from a low-scoring facility reported improvement in their child’s behavior and relationship with their child upon release from the commitment facility than was reported by the youth themselves. This finding is consistent for the six-month and 12-month contact. It is interesting also to note that a greater percentage of children from high scoring programs reporting improved relationships with family. This difference is more pronounced at the 12-month contact. While it is not clear how to interpret the responses, it does not support theoretical expectations for the low QA group to report that more of their current friends are different from their former friends than found in the high QA group (52% vs. 40%)

Table 12.3-3: Comparison Between Low and High Scoring Programs for Guardian and Student Responses on Community Outcome: Relationship (in percentages)

Community Outcome: Relationship	6-Month		12-Month	
	Low Scoring	High Scoring	Low Scoring	High Scoring
Guardian reported child's behavior has improved	68%	56%	61%	58%
Guardian reported relationship with child has improved	61%	55%	59%	57%
Student reported relationship with family has improved	69%	77%	60%	74%
Student reported most or all peers attend school	56%	48%	52%	59%
Student reported most or all peers employed	64%	64%	55%	53%
Student reported peers are not involved in delinquent activities	53%	57%	52%	47%
Student reported current friends are different than peers before entering commitment program	52%	40%	41%	36%

While no clear pattern exists when examining educational reintegration (Table 12.3-4), several findings are particularly noteworthy. One apparent difference between students who exited from a low scoring program versus students that exited from high scoring programs is the percent of students who reportedly have received their high school diplomas or the equivalent. Students, and guardians of students, from high scoring programs were more likely to report having received their diplomas or an equivalent. This relationship held true in terms of student reports at both the six-month contact (22% vs. 43%) and the 12-month contact (24% vs. 37%). Students and the guardians of students from low scoring programs were more likely to report being enrolled in school since release. While this is a positive result for low scoring programs, the result may be merely because more students from the high scoring programs already have received their diploma or an equivalent and therefore did not enroll in school upon release. This finding appears to be supported by the greater percentage of students, and the guardians of students, from the high scoring programs who report being currently employed (refer to Table 12.3-5). Generally, students that exited from high-scoring programs are more likely to report: improvement in school performance, obtaining a high school diploma or its equivalent, that their education was very important, and that they have been employed upon release. If successful community reintegration was

measured through positive educational and employment outcomes, those students that exited from higher scoring programs were more likely to report successes.

Table 12.3-4: Comparison Between Low-Scoring and High-Scoring Programs for Guardian and Student Responses on Community Outcome: Education (in percentages)

Community Outcome: Education	6-Month		12-Month	
	Low Scoring	High Scoring	Low Scoring	High Scoring
Guardian reported that child's school performance has improved	42%	39%	37%	52%
Guardian reported that child has been enrolled in school since release	NA	NA	69%	56%
Guardian reported that child's education performance is good	NA	NA	51%	43%
Guardian reported that child has received high school diploma or equivalent	NA	NA	18%	36%
Student reported that they have been enrolled in school post-release	63%	54%	69%	66%
Student reported that their school performance has improved	69%	76%	61%	72%
Student reported that their school performance is good	62%	50%	54%	55%
Student reported they have received high school diploma or equivalent	22%	43%	24%	37%
Student reported that they felt that their education was very important	83%	77%	80%	81%

Table 12.3-5: Comparison Between Low-Scoring and High-Scoring Programs for Guardian and Student Responses on Community Outcome: Employment (in percentages)

Community Outcome: Employment	6-Month		12-Month	
	Low Scoring	High Scoring	Low Scoring	High Scoring
Guardian reported that child was currently working	NA	NA	28%	38%
Student reported currently working	38%	49%	46%	47%

Similar to the aforementioned findings, no clear pattern exists across the low-scoring and high-scoring programs on the students' involvement in community activities upon release as shown in Table 12.3-6. Students and guardians report differing patterns of success when measuring community reintegration through community involvement. Students from high-scoring programs were more likely to report at the six-month and 12-month contact that their involvement in community activities, such as church, athletics, volunteer work, and clubs, had increased after release. Guardians of students from the low scoring programs, however, were more likely to report that the involvement of their child in these activities had increased.

The most important finding in Table 12.3-6 may be the differential between guardian and student reporting of community involvement. In all four comparisons, students report greater involvement than do the guardians, and the differences are very pronounced for the high QA group.

Table 12.3-6: Comparison Between Low-Scoring and High Scoring Programs for Guardian and Student Responses on Community Outcome: Community Involvement (in percentages)

Community Outcome: Community Involvement	6-Month		12-Month	
	Low Scoring	High Scoring	Low Scoring	High Scoring
Guardian reported that child's community involvement has increased	30%	19%	30%	25%
Student reported that their community involvement has increased	38%	51%	42%	49%

In Table 12.3-7, highly inconsistent patterns of results are revealed when examining successful community reintegration by avoidance of delinquent activities. The results differ by six-month and 12-month contacts and between the guardian and student responses. However, these differences in percentages are fairly small.

Perhaps the most important finding in this table is also the most confusing. In terms of students reporting that they have not been in trouble with the police since their release, the difference favors the high QA group at the six-month period (65% vs. 75%), but it favors the low QA group at the 12-month period (72% vs. 60%). A satisfactory explanation for this reversal is the pattern of self-reported trouble with the police is not readily apparent, but it raises questions about the stability of some of the student responses.

One possible explanation for the reported lack of significant differences in general may be due to the sensitive nature of asking guardians and student respondents about participation in illegal behavior. Additionally, as is the case in the other preliminary results examined above, this bivariate relationship between low/high scoring programs and reported involvement in delinquent behavior does not control for a variety of factors that may conceal the true relationship of these variables. Further analysis that will employ a variety of controls is necessary to further examine reported differences between students released from the low-scoring and high-scoring programs for all community reintegration measures.

Table 12.3-7: Comparison Between Low-Scoring and High Scoring Programs for Guardian and Student Responses on Community Outcome: Delinquency (in percentages)

Community Outcome: Delinquency	6-Month		12-Month	
	Low Scoring	High Scoring	Low Scoring	High Scoring
Guardian reported that child had not been in another commitment program post-release	78%	73%	71%	69%
Guardian reported that child has not used alcohol since release	NA	NA	56%	44%
Guardian reported that child has not used marijuana since release	NA	NA	59%	65%
Guardian reported that child has not used any other drugs since release	NA	NA	90%	88%
Student reported that they had not been in another commitment program post-release	98%	98%	90%	94%
Student reported not using alcohol since release	54%	54%	43%	53%
Student reported not using marijuana since release	74%	65%	71%	60%
Student reported not having used any other drugs since release	87%	84%	89%	85%
Student reported not taking property since release	89%	90%	90%	85%
Student reported not having damaged property since release	94%	89%	87%	88%
Student reported not physically harming anyone since release	78%	80%	78%	80%
Student reported not being involved in gang activity since release	100%	100%	97%	98%
Student reported not having been in trouble with police since release	65%	75%	72%	60%

As the above tables show, there appears to be a nominal percentage difference between low and high-scoring programs. In general, guardians and students from low-scoring programs report greater success in reintegrating back into the community in the areas of relationships and avoidance of delinquent activities. Guardians and students from high scoring programs report greater success in education and employment. Specifically, more guardians and students from high-programs reported students currently working than those from the low-scoring programs. More guardians from high-scoring programs reported improvement in the students' school performance at the 12-month contact. Similarly, more students from high-scoring programs at both the six-month and 12 month contacts reported that their school performance had improved than students from low-scoring programs. More guardians and students from high-scoring programs reported that students had received a high school diploma or equivalent than those from low-scoring programs. Furthermore, more students from high-scoring programs reported that they felt their education was very important. In fact, the largest differences between those students from low scoring and high scoring programs were in the successful community reintegration defined by educational attainment. It is important to note, moreover, that the percent differences in favor of low-scoring programs that were evident at six months became less pronounced at the 12-month follow-up.

12.4 Summary Discussion

One of JJEEP's major functions is to conduct evaluation research to determine whether higher QA performing educational programs produce better academic performance outcomes

in comparison to lower QA performing programs. The ultimate goal of the longitudinal research study is to determine how quality education relates to various community reintegration outcomes. While these preliminary findings do not demonstrate a strong difference in the relationship between the QA scores and community reintegration, these findings are incomplete and require further analysis to more accurately assess the relationship.

The current analysis, for example, did not introduce control variables such as security level, length of stay, and program size that may have considerably impacted the results. These controls as well as others at the individual level, such as age, special education status, length of stay, and the seriousness score, will be essential variables to take into account in future research. Moreover, official data for each of the community reintegration areas was not addressed in this analysis. JJEEP will incorporate official academic information on the youths, such as transcripts, grades, credits earned, days missed from school, number of suspensions, and diploma track from the DOE statewide database in conjunction with the DOE district management information systems (MIS), legal variables, such as re-arrests, convictions, and commitments from the JJIS of DJJ, and employment information, including type of job, hourly wages, and length of time on the job from the Florida Education and Training Placement Information Program (FETPIP), into a more complete analysis of the relationship between QA and community reintegration.

The current findings have additional implications for further analysis. In this project, the students who were successfully contacted included only those youths who were not recommitted and who JJEEP located. The students who completed the survey, therefore, were quite possibly the most successful of the released population, regardless of the program. Future analysis will need to account for this sample bias.

Furthermore, the data show a change in percentage differences from the six-month to the 12-month follow-up periods, demonstrating a need for future research to examine students at 18 months and two years after follow-up. Such extended follow-ups may demonstrate more accurate portrayals of the students' community reintegration success given a more realistic timeframe in which they may immerse themselves back into the community.

Additionally, as discussed in Chapter 10 of this report, there are limitations to solely utilizing QA scores in determining the quality of an education program. More comprehensive measures of educational gains and community reintegration will be incorporated in future analyses by including measures of pupil progression and academic gains as outcome measures to evaluate the quality of these educational programs.

While these limitations are essential to note, the relationships that are revealed in the findings are critical. Most striking in the results is the positive relationship between high QA and educational and employment reintegration; students from high-scoring programs were more likely to report being enrolled in school and employed upon release. These findings also support and enhance those found in the longitudinal study discussed in Chapter 11 of this report. The longitudinal study similarly found a positive relationship between return to school and QA scores. Further, while the longitudinal study did not find marked differences

between the high and low-scoring programs in terms of employment post-release, the self-report study did, in fact, demonstrate a difference in favor of high-scoring programs. Additionally, the small difference that the longitudinal study found in terms of employment in favor of low-scoring programs supports the self-report study's finding that more students from high-scoring programs have returned to school, and, thus may not be working as much as those from low-scoring programs who have not returned to school as frequently.

Not only, therefore, does this current, self-report study provide important data regarding the relationship between QA and community reintegration, but it also supports additional research in this area. With future analysis of the data as well as additional studies, JJEEP will have examined this relationship comprehensively, allowing for important implications and policies to follow. Finally, and of particular importance to other researchers planning to conduct self-report studies with juvenile offenders, parents and/or guardians can play a sound role as proxies in reporting many of the community reintegration outcomes of their children (i.e. return to school, employment status, rearrest).