

# Chapter 8

## Recent and Forthcoming Initiatives

### 8.1 INTRODUCTION

Throughout its nine-year history, the Juvenile Justice Educational Enhancement Program (JJEEP) has focused on the review, generation, and collection of empirical data to inform its priorities and shape its multiple functions and operations. Because there is no clear guide or consensus in the field regarding best practices in juvenile justice education, JJEEP continually strives to incorporate new research evidence into its quality assurance (QA) and system improvement processes, as well as use the results of research to formulate annual policy recommendations to the Florida Department of Education (DOE). In this regard, JJEEP is indeed a data-driven operation.

From the outset, JJEEP has insisted that empirical research findings serve as the basis for its operations, envisioning that the infusion of empirical data into juvenile justice educational policy and practice will result in a quality educational system for committed and at-risk juveniles throughout Florida. Beginning with an exhaustive review of the available empirical literature on best practices in correctional juvenile education, JJEEP staff identified dozens of scientifically-validated practices demonstrated to yield favorable student outcomes (e.g., increased academic performance measured by tests, improved behavioral performance as reported by teachers, successful community reintegration outcomes). These best practices have been categorized and now serve as the guide for QA reviews and the basis for program performance scores. This data-driven scoring procedure is also reflected in JJEEP's ongoing "demonstration site" project, which is discussed later in this chapter.

Over the years, JJEEP has continued to update this compilation of best practices literature and integrate such current, rigorous scientific knowledge into annual modifications to the QA review process. A major development with updating the QA process involves moving from a calendar year to a fiscal year schedule. Among the many advantages to this new protocol is that JJEEP's annual policy recommendations will be available in time for Florida's legislative session, thereby increasing the potential for JJEEP's research to inform Florida juvenile justice education policy. Another substantial modification is the inclusion of school district and program profiles in the annual QA reports to provide programs with trend data that can be analyzed and used to improve program performance.

In addition, JJEEP conducts its own research in order to expand the knowledge base and supplement existing literature. For example, JJEEP's longitudinal research involving youths released from institutions across the state provides additional insight into the process of examining the extent to which certain program features (i.e., those identified in the *best practice* literature) are associated with more favorable community outcomes. Similarly, the demonstration site project—while using the existing empirical literature as its foundation—identified additional factors not mentioned in the prior research as possible correlates of high program performance.

The remainder of this chapter consists of five sections. Section 8.2 identifies and describes a sample of JJEEP's recent and forthcoming research initiatives including evaluation using the Basic Achievement Skills Inventory (BASI) and the demonstration site project. Regarding the QA process, Section 8.3 identifies the new protocols to be launched in 2007-2008, while Section 8.4 outlines the new system improvement process that includes providing technical assistance (TA) to the lowest-performing programs. Section 8.5 consists of policy recommendations aimed at assuring the successful transition of juvenile justice students back into the community setting. Lastly, Section 8.6 provides a summary discussion of JJEEP's research, QA process, TA initiatives, and policy recommendations.

## **8.2 RESEARCH INITIATIVES**

Throughout its nine-year existence, JJEEP has relied on empirical data—reviewed in the existing research literature as well as conducted and analyzed by JJEEP research staff—to inform its priorities and shape its operations. This section presents several current and future research-related initiatives in the areas of (1) statewide data management; (2) data and JJEEP staff training; (3) teacher qualifications and characteristics; (4) program evaluation and the BASI; (5) school district and program profiles; (6) longitudinal student outcomes; and (7) demonstration sites.

### **Statewide Data Management**

JJEEP began developing a comprehensive, statewide data management system in 1998, which consists of databases containing program characteristics and performance results, teacher qualifications and characteristics, student performance, and student community reintegration results. These multiple databases have evolved into integrated and comprehensive research tools that have enabled JJEEP to address important questions concerning effective juvenile justice educational practices for Florida's delinquent youth population.

As the databases have expanded, more comprehensive program descriptions, explanations, and trend data have benefited numerous program applications, improvements, and associated best practices in Florida's juvenile justice educational system. This year, for example, JJEEP used this data to inform and respond to information requests from policy makers, present research at national and state conferences on juvenile justice education, and conduct new longitudinal research on student outcomes.

These data are also used on an annual basis to inform the QA standards revision process, as well as to produce JJEEP's annual report to the DOE. The annual report contains data regarding the educational performance of juvenile justice programs, student demographics, TA provided to programs, and policy recommendations. In addition, each year the report has various thematic chapters that include such topics as teacher qualifications, gender, longitudinal student outcomes, crime over the life course, *No Child Left Behind* (NCLB) legislation, and case studies of juvenile justice programs.

Historically, JJEEP's annual report to the DOE has included policy recommendations; however, these recommendations have typically been provided to the DOE in March. By the time DOE staff has reviewed the report, the Florida Legislature is no longer in session; therefore, they are not able to use the policy recommendations to the full extent. In an effort to make JJEEP's policy recommendations more useful to state policy makers, it was

recognized that a change in the QA review cycle would allow the data and annual report to become available prior to the legislative session. With the new QA review schedule, the DOE's revisions can be made and the annual report can be submitted to the legislature by February 1, thereby informing policymakers prior to substantive and fiscal decision-making.

## **Data and JJEEP Staff Training**

JJEEP is also examining the application of the data in others areas such as improving training practices. A primary goal of data-driven training will be to improve upon the existing annual reviewer training protocol. Currently, JJEEP staff training consists primarily of content-related training in areas identified by JJEEP and the DOE, whereby information is presented and discussed as it pertains to the new QA standards. Training also includes developing and revising rating guidelines, and reviewing protocols and data collection methods. By including the QA performance data collected during reviews, JJEEP will be able to identify less obvious areas in which additional or updated content area training is needed. This will also serve as an accountability measure to ensure that there is overall consistency in the implementation of the QA review protocol and rating guidelines.

## **Teacher Qualifications and Characteristics**

In 1999, JJEEP began collecting data on educational personnel working in juvenile justice programs. Since this time, the information collected during QA reviews has expanded to include teacher qualifications and demographic characteristics and information on educational personnel who provide administration, guidance/transition services, and exceptional student education (ESE) services. This data is used to report the levels of teachers' certification, the number of courses taught by in-field teachers, and the teacher retention rate in Florida's juvenile justice programs. JJEEP provides the results of these analyses in annual reports.

In addition, data on teachers and educational personnel working in juvenile justice programs are presented at state and national conferences and used to formulate policy recommendations regarding the qualifications and retention rates of educational staff working with juvenile justice involved youth.

## **Program Evaluation and the BASI**

Another initiative that began July 2006 will provide a new facet to existing program evaluation research conducted by JJEEP. Program evaluation research is focused on evaluating the quality of juvenile justice educational programs in relation to program demographics such as size, type, provider, staff characteristics, type of population served, and location. Program evaluation of juvenile justice educational programs is also a major requirement of NCLB.

In response to the implementation of Florida Statue 1003.52 requiring the DOE to select and implement a uniform academic entry/exit assessment in juvenile justice schools, Florida's juvenile justice programs began administering the Basic Achievement Skills Inventory (BASI) in July 2006. The BASI is a multilevel assessment that is norm referenced and helps to identify students' academic strengths and weaknesses. The BASI is designed to be used only as an entry and exit assessment and not for diagnostic or progress monitoring purposes.

A particular strength of the BASI is its depth in both the areas it assesses and the range of grade levels it covers. The BASI includes reading, language arts, and math subtests that cover grades 3 through 12. The assessment can be administered via computer or pencil and paper. Each subtest is timed, and total test administration takes 115 minutes. Subtests can be administered over several days when flexible scheduling is necessary to meet the needs of students.

One of the benefits of utilizing this entry/exit assessment tool is determining the specific student educational gains that certain subpopulations may experience while committed to juvenile justice programs. This research also assists in the identification of juvenile justice educational programs that produce the greatest educational student gains and validating the QA process by testing the relationship between QA ratings and program-level student educational gains. Juvenile justice schools are required to electronically report BASI results through the DOE's Automated Student Database. Assessment results are used to measure student gains during their commitment.

## **Program and School District Profiles**

Lastly, JJEEP will use QA data and official state data to provide programs with a *program profile* which includes QA performance trend data and student population profiles. This data will be included in each program's annual QA report. The trend data will include three years of QA scores (including the current year) at the standard and indicator levels, as well as comparison scores for similar program types.

The comparison program types will be divided into four categories:

- day treatment
- detention
- low- and moderate-risk residential programs
- high- and maximum-risk residential programs.

This trend data provides programs the opportunity to view patterns, strengths, and weaknesses in their educational performance. The student profile will come from Survey 5 data which is student-level data submitted to the DOE by school districts for the 2004-2005 school year.

This program profile will provide information on the number of youth served by the program and demographic information (e.g., gender, race, age, grade level). The program profile will also include information on students with disabilities, the number of diplomas issued by the program, and two years of the program's statewide assessment participation rates. As BASI data becomes available, it will be added to the program profiles. Additional information may be included in the future depending on data quality and availability, and the needs of programs.

In addition to creating program profiles, JJEEP will also initiate efforts to develop *school district profiles*. Utilizing the design of the program-level profiles, the district profile will provide school districts information about all Department of Juvenile Justice (DJJ) programs in their districts. Making DJJ program information available to districts will increase their awareness of the educational performance of DJJ programs and provide relevant data to assist decision-making processes.

To provide the most relevant data, JJEEP will solicit input from school districts to identify the most relevant data to share. Soliciting input from senior school district personnel regarding the content of the program profiles will strengthen the partnership between JJEEP and school districts.

## Longitudinal Student Outcomes

In addition to data collected through the QA process, JJEEP continues to expand its research on longitudinal student outcomes. The longitudinal research is designed to measure community reintegration of students following their release from juvenile justice facilities. Each year JJEEP receives student-level data from a multiple state agencies and official sources.

These data provide the basis from which to evaluate aggregate student performance in relation to various demographic and program characteristics and to assist in the specification of facility and student outcomes, such as school success (e.g., credits, diplomas earned, return to school) and continuation of delinquency (e.g., arrest, recommitment rates). These data are matched using student identifiers enabling JJEEP to track the student records over time.

JJEEP will continue to create cohorts of students to develop more efficient methods to assess the impact of new measures on educational quality and to longitudinally track the outcomes of these measures in juvenile justice programs. Chapter 6 presents preliminary analysis conducted with the combined student-level database. Future longitudinal research will analyze the outcomes of multiple cohorts, specific types of youths, and the environmental factors that affect long-term outcomes prior to, during, and following commitment. As recommended in Chapter 6, JJEEP will need to continue to differentiate its groups of youths subject to longitudinal studies in its ongoing effort to answer the question of “What works best and for whom?”

## Demonstration Sites

Over the past few years, JJEEP has identified five residential *demonstration sites* throughout the state of Florida as model programs or lab schools: Washington County School Program at Dozier, the former Pinellas Sheriff's Boot Camp, Avon Park Youth Academy, Stewart/Marchman Oaks Halfway House, and Pensacola Boys Base

These programs have amply demonstrated a wide range of exemplary and replicable best practices in juvenile justice education, as evidenced by their consistently high QA scores, interviews with JJEEP staff who have reviewed the program, a review of self-report documents, and an on-site visit including observations, interviews, and surveys. (Please refer to the JJEEP Web site at <http://www.jjeep.fsu.edu> for detailed descriptions of these five demonstration sites.)

As presented in JJEEP's 2005 Annual Report (which is also available on the JJEEP Web site), a scoring rubric of best practices was developed on the basis of a review of the research literature on best educational practices for at-risk and delinquent students. Programs needed to exhibit a satisfactory number of best practices in order to be considered as a *high-performing* demonstration site; programs exhibiting an insufficient number of best practices were categorized as *average* or *low-performing* programs. Compared to the average and low-

performing programs, the high-performing demonstration sites excel in such best practice areas as business and community partnerships; strong emphasis on reading, writing and speech; teacher qualifications and recruitment and retention strategies; and exit and aftercare services. Moreover, case studies of these programs identified stability as one of the most salient features of Florida's highest-performing residential programs.

Specifically, stability among program providers, administrators, and educational staff decreased as one moved from the high-performing to the average-performing programs and then to the low-performing programs. Stability appears to be strongly related to such best practices as communication and cooperation at the program and the school district levels which, in turn, are associated with consistent and quality services for the students, as well as positive working and learning environments.

### **PURPOSES OF DEMONSTRATION SITES**

The purpose for establishing demonstration sites is to enhance technical assistance and collaboration among Florida's juvenile justice programs and practitioners, as well as with JJEEP. Demonstration sites will be available so that other programs in the state can visit or otherwise contact them in an effort to enhance their program performance by increasing their number of best practices. In other words, the demonstration sites will serve as lab schools of replicable and empirically-verified best practices in order to improve the quality of educational services provided throughout the state of Florida to committed youth.

Demonstration sites are responsible for maintaining high QA scores, providing TA to programs in need, permitting visits for the purposes of program improvement or research, presenting with JJEEP staff at conferences, being featured in JJEEP's annual reports and Web site, and participating in the QA process. For example, Avon Park Youth Academy, Stewart/Marchman Oaks Halfway House, and Pensacola Boys Base presented with JJEEP staff at the 2006 Juvenile Justice Educational Institute (JJEI) and Southern Conference on Corrections in Orlando.

After a brief introduction by JJEEP staff detailing the purpose of demonstration sites and the criteria for becoming a demonstration site, representatives from these high-performing programs shared several of their best practices and were available to answer questions following the presentation. Several alternative education programs are attempting to replicate the Avon Park model, and Florida Senator Stephen R. Wise, who visited the Avon Park Youth Academy in the fall of 2006, is committed to developing more programs based on their career model.

JJEEP will continue its demonstration sites project and develop a research design for identifying potential day treatment and detention demonstration sites. The day treatment research design may be a modified version of the residential program research design, based on a supplementary review of available empirical literature addressing best educational practices in day treatment facilities. Importantly, JJEEP is hoping to identify exemplary residential and day treatment programs for females as demonstration sites.

As with the day treatment modifications to the residential scoring rubric (if appropriate), a third empirical literature review will be conducted in order to identify best educational practices for juveniles committed for shorter commitment periods. While the residential and day treatment scoring rubrics and research designs are anticipated to be quite similar, it is expected that substantial revisions will be necessary in order to apply the current

evaluation instrument to detention programs whose best practices may be necessarily different from those found to be successful in long-term commitment facilities.

### 8.3 QUALITY ASSURANCE INITIATIVES

JJEEP's second function is to conduct annual QA reviews. This year, however, the timing of the QA review cycle will shift from a calendar year to a fiscal year. No QA reviews will be scheduled during the Florida Comprehensive Assessment Test (FCAT) administration, the annual JJEI conference, or on holidays.

JJIEI will now be held prior to the beginning of QA reviews for the fiscal year; therefore, school districts and providers will not have to prepare for a QA review the week prior, during, or after the conference. Previously, QA reviews have been conducted throughout the summer, preventing some school district and provider personnel from attending the annual conference.

Revision of the QA standards will begin in March and will conclude after they are presented at the annual conference. The annual standards revision meeting will be held in the spring, which allows for over three-quarters of the QA reviews to be completed prior to the revision of the standards; in the past, the standards revision meeting was convened earlier which did not allow for the majority of reviews to be conducted before changes were discussed. These seven months are key to recognizing areas within the standards that need to be addressed prior to the next QA cycle.

During the transition year from the previous QA cycle (February to October) to the revised QA cycle (July to June), JJEEP staff will provide extensive TA to low-performing programs and to new programs based on the system improvement process discussed in Section 8.4. Regional meetings will be held to explain the changes in the new QA cycle, to introduce the 2007-2008 QA standards, to train new contract managers, and to discuss data-driven needs. Additionally, targeted peer reviewers will be trained to assist with QA reviews and TA.

While providing more assistance and need-driven intervention to low-performing programs, JJEEP will continue to acknowledge high-performing programs based on previous overall QA scores. A juvenile justice educational program that receives an overall average score of 6.5 or higher is awarded exemplary status and will receive an abbreviated one-day review for the next two years. A one-day exemplary program review consists of verification of the program's self-report and an on-site review of only the *critical* benchmarks. A program with an overall average score of 7.0 or higher will not receive an on-site visit for one year. During the subsequent second and third years, these exemplary programs will receive a one-day review of only the critical benchmarks.

Critical benchmarks are rated as *pass/fail*. If an exemplary program fails one critical benchmark, deficiencies and recommendations are included in the QA report. If an exemplary program fails more than one critical benchmark, it loses exemplary status and receives a full educational review the same year. An exemplary program that undergoes an educational provider change will receive a full educational QA review the following year.

For state agency and annual reporting purposes, the QA scores for programs that receive exemplary status are carried into the following year for the duration of their exemplary status until the next full educational QA review is conducted.

In its 10th year of conducting QA reviews, JJEEP continues to focus on increasing consistency among reviewers and ensuring accurate and complete data gathering through an evidence-based system. QA reviews for lower-performing programs may be extended to focus resources on the programs who need the most assistance. JJEEP will continue to collaborate with school districts, program providers, DJJ, and DOE to ensure that Florida's juvenile justice youth who are released from a DJJ facility will be prepared to participate in school, work, and home settings as successful and well-educated citizens, thereby increasing their potential for future success.

## **8.4 SYSTEM IMPROVEMENT PROCESS**

JJEEP's third function is to provide TA to improve the quality of educational services provided to youth in juvenile justice facilities throughout the state. The purpose of the system improvement process is to appropriately allocate JJEEP resources by focusing targeting increased TA efforts on low-performing programs and conduct QA on those programs that exceed standards only as needed.

After reviewing previous years' corrective action plan (CAP) information, JJEEP project staff became aware that QA reviewers were not providing continuous on-site TA to the

low-performing programs and that these programs were not experiencing success in subsequent years; therefore, JJEEP revised the system improvement process to include a comprehensive process for corrective action and on-site TA for all programs with an overall score below 4.00.

Guided by research in current best practices, TA is integrated into all of JJEEP's activities and is scheduled throughout the QA review cycle to address program and school district needs in a timely manner.

When a program's QA scores reveal deficiencies that do not result in the failure of any standard, the following procedures will be used to address the problems:

- Programs that receive a *partial* (0 to 3) rating in any indicator but have an average standard score in the *satisfactory* range, will be notified of deficiencies and corresponding recommendations for addressing the deficiencies in their written QA reports.
- Representatives from the school district and the program will be notified during the exit meeting of any potential failing indicators.
- The school district and the program are expected to address identified deficiencies prior to the following year's QA review.
- Programs should utilize school district and state resources to assist them in correcting deficiencies.

### **Corrective Action Plan Process**

When a program's QA scores reveal deficiencies that result in the failure of one or more of standards 1, 2, or 3, a corrective action plan (CAP) is required. When a school district fails standard 4 for two or more consecutive years, a CAP is required. The CAP initiates a process

that will enable programs to identify and correct systemic problems that may be contributing to below satisfactory ratings.

Programs and/or school districts that receive a CAP must establish a corrective action team and include the lead educator, the school district contract manager (or official designee), and other parties involved in the areas requiring corrective action. With assistance from JJEEP and DOE staff, the school district is responsible for developing the CAP and ensuring that it is returned to JJEEP within 90 days of the date of the official DOE notification letter. DOE staff review all CAPs submitted.

School districts are required to meet the timelines in the State Board of Education (SBE) rule for the implementation of CAPs. The school district superintendent will verify by signature on the CAP implementation form that the CAP has been implemented and will submit the signed form to the JJEEP QA review director. This form must be submitted within six months of the date of the official notification letter from DOE.

JJEEP staff conducts a final follow-up of the CAP implementation during the following year's QA review. If a program fails to submit its CAP within two weeks of the due date, the QA review director will write and submit a letter informing the program, the school district, and the DOE that the CAP was not submitted.

The following tables illustrate the corrective action process for programs (Table 8.4-1) and school districts (Table 8.4-2).

**TABLE 8.4-1  
Program CAP Process**

QA Review Cycle	Trigger	Action
Year 1	Fail standard 1, 2, or 3	CAP required
Year 2	Fail the same standard two consecutive years	CAP required DOE notified for intervention and/or sanctions
Year 3+	Fail the same standard three (or more) consecutive years	CAP required Program remains on DOE list for intervention and/or sanctions

**TABLE 8.4-2  
School District CAP Process**

QA Review Cycle	Trigger	Action
Year 1	Fail standard 4	Deficiencies noted in QA report
Year 2	Fail standard 4 two consecutive years	CAP required
Year 3	Fail standard 4 three consecutive years	CAP required DOE notified for intervention and/or sanctions
Year 4+	Fail standard 4 four (or more) consecutive years	CAP required School district remains on DOE list for intervention and/or sanctions

JJEEP and/or DOE will provide TA to programs and/or school districts that receive CAPs. The majority of TA occurs during the on-site QA review visits and through the recommendations in the final QA reports; however, contact with program and school district staff via telephone, e-mail, and postal mail is routine. TA provided by JJEEP includes answering questions, clarifying Florida policies, assisting programs in networking with other programs, and providing samples and examples of what is working in other programs.

## **Technical Assistance Process**

TA provided to programs and school districts is based on the following criteria:

*New Programs*—Programs new to the juvenile justice system may receive an initial TA visit and a mock QA review. The following steps outline JJEEP’s TA protocol for new programs.

1. When JJEEP is notified of a new program based on the DJJ schedule or contact from school district officials, the QA training director will assign a reviewer to conduct an initial TA visit, including a mock QA.
2. The reviewer completes a TA request form and returns it to the QA training director.
3. The reviewer contacts the program to schedule the TA visit and collaborate with program/school district personnel to clarify the on-site agenda, QA review methods, and expectations.
4. The reviewer conducts the site visit and writes a mock QA report.
5. The reviewer identifies needs for TA follow-up and develops a schedule for delivering TA support services as needed.

The initial QA review for new programs is not scheduled prior to six months following the mock QA or the last on-site TA visit. A different reviewer will conduct the initial QA review.

*Education Provider Change*—Programs that undergo a change in the educational provider may receive TA prior to their QA reviews. TA will be provided based on the identified needs of the educational program. The school district informs JJEEP within two weeks of notification of an educational provider change.

*Corrective Action Follow-Up*—Programs that fail at least one of standards 1, 2, or 3 and receive a passing overall score (4.00 or higher) receive a CAP and follow-up TA. School districts that fail standard 4 for two consecutive years receive a CAP and follow-up TA. The reviewer and peer reviewers (when appropriate) provide intervention strategies, networking, and other resources based on the needs of the program. In addition, the reviewer may contact school district personnel if the program needs additional assistance.

*Failing Programs*—Programs that score less than 4.00 overall receive a CAP and a TA visit to include the following steps:

1. The reviewer and a DOE representative (as appropriate) meet with the CAP team to monitor the program for correcting the deficiencies identified in the QA report.
2. The reviewer administers a needs assessment to school district and program administrators, teachers, and students.

3. The reviewer provides the school district and the program with the results of the needs assessment and follow-up TA as needed.

When a program and/or school district is identified as needing an intervention and/or sanction, JJEEP facilitates meetings with all relevant parties including JJEEP administration, DOE representatives, school district officials, provider personnel, program administration, and DJJ staff when appropriate. Through these meetings, programs and school districts identify the systemic problems associated with poor performance and the appropriate solutions and responsible parties for implementation. This process may also result in a monitoring plan from DOE.

JJEEP staff continues to reevaluate the system improvement process each year to examine its effectiveness. Additionally, JJEEP and DOE personnel will conduct TA through regional meetings held prior to the 2007-2008 QA review cycle to address questions regarding the new QA review cycle, reading requirements, exceptional student education (ESE) services, and contract management responsibilities. Meetings are planned in Tallahassee, Tampa, and Miami to allow program and school district personnel the opportunity to choose the most convenient location.

In addition, JJEEP is exploring the development of a resource bank of materials that can be downloaded from its Web site to assist school district and program personnel. Data from QA reviews and the percentage of failing benchmarks will be used to determine which areas will require resources to be posted. For example, if individual academic plan (IAP) development is one of the benchmarks that receives the highest number of failures, then sample IAPs that include measurable goals will be placed on the Web site.

## 8.5 POLICY

JJEEP's fourth and final function is to provide annual policy recommendations to the DOE.

While JJEEP has undertaken extensive data collection efforts over the past nine years, utilizing these data to inform the policymaking process has been a challenge. Traditionally, JJEEP's policy role has consisted of compiling its research and information in its annual report to the DOE, serving on various committees, and presenting at conferences throughout the state of Florida and the nation.

With the increasing demands of accountability and measurement at the state and federal levels, JJEEP's role in providing data to inform policy is expanding. In response to the increased need to inform policymakers of the changes that need to be addressed in juvenile justice education, JJEEP has two initiatives that will positively impact its function of providing annual policy recommendations to DOE. First, JJEEP will inform policymakers in a more timely fashion in hopes of increasing the opportunities for the development of policies that will positively impact juvenile justice education and second, JJEEP will expand its communication efforts to better disseminate information from school districts.

Historically, JJEEP's annual report to the DOE includes policy recommendations; however, these recommendations have been provided to DOE in March. The timing is such that DOE has a limited amount of time for review and development prior to the end of the Legislative Session. Therefore, these recommendations are not utilized to the fullest extent. The new QA review cycle will allow data and related information to be gathered and synthesized in the annual report in January. After review by the DOE, the annual report will be available to

the Florida Legislature by February 1, thereby informing policymakers prior to the Legislative Session.

Another process change for JJEEP that will facilitate the development of policy recommendations is the commitment JJEEP is making to build more effective partnerships with school districts. By providing superintendents with program profiles and encouraging their involvement throughout the QA review process, superintendents will become more informed of the strengths and challenges their juvenile justice programs experience, which in turn may lead to open dialogue with school board members and local politicians regarding resource allocation decisions.

Additionally, JJEEP's collaboration with superintendents and their school districts will provide opportunities to share information on policies that are effective or ineffective. JJEEP staff can utilize this information to inform DOE of policies that need to be addressed.

JJEEP staff are hopeful that these changes will enhance the ability to respond proactively in an ever-shifting political climate, thereby increasing accountability and improving the lives of Florida's delinquent youth. As Florida continues to implement the requirements of NCLB in its juvenile justice educational programs, the following recommendations should be considered:

- Highly Qualified Teachers
  - ◇ Create a certification area for teaching at-risk and delinquent youth in multilevel educational programs.
  - ◇ Collaborate with state colleges and universities to prepare future teachers for working with at-risk and delinquent youth, to place college students in juvenile facilities for their teaching practicum, and focus on early recruitment.
  - ◇ Classify teaching in juvenile justice education programs as a critical teacher shortage area.
  - ◇ Expand the use of the middle grades integrated curriculum certification to grades 10 – 12 for appropriate courses.
- Transition Services
  - ◇ As part of their cooperative agreements with the DJJ, school districts should develop local transition protocols for youth who are returning to their districts from juvenile justice facilities throughout the state.
  - ◇ Recruit local volunteer educational advocates to assist students with community reintegration, job placement, and/or attending school upon release.
- Student Outcomes
  - ◇ Conduct student performance and academic gains research using the state's new uniform entry and exit assessment, and annually report academic student performance data for juvenile justice education programs.

- Program Monitoring
  - ◇ Report student performance data as part of each program’s annual QA report.
  - ◇ Align the current QA process with school district-reported student data so that both systems are reporting information on the most recent school year rather than calendar year.
- Career and Technical Education
  - ◇ Evaluate the “Career Pathways Academy” model as an educational alternative for delinquent youth who are older and unlikely to return to school after their release from the juvenile justice system.
  - ◇ Sequentially report to the legislature longitudinal findings on the relationship between career and technical training for older committed youth and employment and recidivism following release.
  - ◇ Expand opportunities and funding for committed youth who have received a high school diploma or its equivalent to participate in career/technical and/or post-secondary education.
  - ◇ Continue implementation of the multiagency plan for career education which includes curriculum, goals, funding, transfer of credits, and outcome measures for career programming in juvenile commitment facilities.

## 8.6 SUMMARY DISCUSSION

JJEEP is continuing its nine-year tradition of using research that identifies the most promising educational practices to shape the annual QA review process, the provision of TA, and the formulation of annual policy recommendations to Florida’s DOE. Specifically, this chapter demonstrates how JJEEP is bolstering its experience with research, QA, and system improvement by looking ahead and planning how to best meet future needs and improve upon the current approach to ensuring the successful transition of students back into community, school, and/or work settings.

First and foremost is JJEEP’s dedication to conducting research that identifies promising educational practices; however, the research initiatives outlined not only identify promising educational practices, but also shape and define JJEEP’s other activities. For instance, in regard to QA data, JJEEP is launching a data-driven reviewer training component to create greater reviewer knowledge and consistency.

Importantly, the QA data—in conjunction with state student-level data—will produce program profiles, which will supply school districts with a new information, evaluation, and decision-making tool. QA performance data and best practices research will continue to inform the standards revision process and rating guidelines.

QA data will be enhanced with the July 2006 implementation of the common entry and exit assessment for youth in juvenile justice programs. Student academic gains data will provide another facet to JJEEP’s program evaluation process.

In addition to increasing the scope and use of QA data, JJEEP will initiate the expansion of the demonstration sites project. This expansion will include a greater utilization of current demonstration sites as a training opportunity for other programs seeking to improve their educational services. Furthermore, because the demonstration sites are currently limited to residential boys programs, JJEEP will begin to identify new demonstration sites that will serve as models for detention, day treatment, and girls programs.

In terms of JJEEP's QA review function, the upcoming year will bring many positive changes. This includes moving the review year from a calendar year cycle to a fiscal year cycle. The implications of moving to a fiscal year cycle include having the annual JJEI conference before the QA cycle begins which allows the QA standards to be revised during the spring and the new standards to be presented at conference.

In addition, consistent with NCLB mandates and Florida's A++ policy, the 2007-2008 QA standards will include providing guidance services to all students regarding the selection of a major area of interest as well as a new indicator entitled "community reintegration" to ensure that programs implement transition planning activities designed to facilitate youths' transition from the DJJ into the community.

Furthermore, JJEEP will continue its ongoing efforts to form collaborative relationships with school districts, providers, Florida's juvenile justice system, and the DOE to ensure that each educational program serving juvenile justice youth is held to the highest scientifically-validated standards, thereby increasing the youths' potential for future success.

JJEEP's primary focus during the transition year from the previous to the revised QA cycle will be providing TA to improve various educational programs. Programs that fail standard 1, 2, and/or 3 and school districts that fail standard 4 for two consecutive years will receive a CAP and follow-up assistance as appropriate. Programs that fail the same standard (1, 2, or 3) for two consecutive years and school districts that fail standard 4 for three consecutive years will receive a CAP and be referred to the DOE for intervention and possible sanctions. Programs referred to DOE will be referred each subsequent year until the deficiencies are corrected.

JJEEP's enhanced guidelines specify that TA will be provided more extensively to low-performing programs and include collaboration among DOE, program, and school district personnel and reviewers to ensure that systemic issues are addressed. JJEEP will focus efforts on using QA data to identify TA needs across all programs via resources such as TA workshops, JJEI conference presentations, and an Internet resource bank to address these areas.

In summary, JJEEP anticipates its future to be as productive, innovative, and successful as the past decade. By continually conducting and reviewing empirical research and incorporating this knowledge into JJEEP's QA, system improvement, and policy recommendations activities, JJEEP expects to continue to serve Florida's juvenile justice population and juvenile justice personnel with dedication, scientific evidence, and responsiveness to changing conditions and needs.