

Department of Children and Families  
Senate Budget Hearing Response for May 13, 2009

During the Department of Children and Families (DCF) hearing before the Senate Budget Committee hearing on May 13, 2009, committee members asked the following questions for which a written response has been requested.

**Regional Schools:**

The FY 2010 recommended budget would phase-out the 18 regional schools operated by the Office of Education beginning in FY 2010, and transfer the 550 - 600 children served by these schools to either the respective county special services school districts or to local school districts in those counties that do not have a special services school district. Many questions were asked by members of the committee, and members requested staff familiar with the subject matter to supplement these questions in order to provide the committee with a better understanding of the issues.

- **Please provide a copy of the department's most current plan and timetable regarding the phase-out of the regional schools.**

Per an agreement with CWA, which has not yet been ratified at the time of this submission, DCF would be required to rescind the plan to close the 18 regional schools. Further, the pending agreement would establish a committee to explore the future of the regional schools.

However, in order to ensure we answer any questions posed by the Committee that are not related to the closure of the schools but rather current facts about the schools, we are providing responses as originally drafted by DCF prior to the proposed agreement.

- **The regional schools serve between 550 - 600 children, and the number of children being served has declined in recent years as local school districts have developed the capacity to provide educational services to such children.**

- (1) **Of the children currently served by the regional schools, how many are the State's responsibility in terms of cost and how many are supported by tuition payments from their local school districts?**

Currently, 559 students are supported by local district tuition payments and 64 students are "state responsible" as determined by the Department of Education's Division of Finance.

- (2) **Over the past several years, how many new children were enrolled at the regional schools? In such instances, why were local schools not able to provide the educational services?**

Students placed in regional schools by local school districts are primarily youth who have severe disabilities. The number of students within this category has significantly declined over the last ten to fifteen years from approximately 1200 students, when all of the regional school programs were serving this population, to the current 248 students.

**OFFICE OF EDUCATION REGIONAL SCHOOLS  
New Admissions of youth with severe disabilities**

School Year	Severely Disabled Students
2008-2009	27
2007-2008	39
2006-2007	27

The students who make up the remainder of the population at the regional schools are students for whom the state is responsible for their education and students that are at-risk of school failure. Students at risk of school failure include those referred through the court system; pregnant or parenting teenagers from multiple referral sources; and children residing in group homes under DCF's Division of Child Behavioral Health Services (DCBHS) that are served by a regional school.

Historically, new enrollments in the regional schools have occurred for various reasons: 1) the enrollment is court or agency referred; 2) some group homes by practice rely on the regional schools as temporary education services for youth who may only stay in the group home for three to nine months, however, DCF set parameters for new group homes to work with their local school districts, which have been able to accommodate the education needs of youth in these settings; and, 3) for students with an Individual Education Plan (IEP), parental preference weighs heavily in DOE's educational decision-making process to place a child in one of the regional schools, more so than a district's inability to provide the necessary and special education services.

**DCF indicated that the decision to phase-out the 18 regional schools is intended to be budget neutral.**

**At present, DOE establishes the various rates local school districts reimburse the Office of Education for education services provided by the regional schools. In recent years, State funds were transferred to the Office of Education to offset revenue shortfalls as the tuition rates established by DOE did not cover all education costs incurred by the Office of Education.**

**As the tuition paid by local school districts to the Office of Education did not cover the total cost of education services provided, will local school districts incur additional costs that are not supported by State or federal reimbursements for those children who are transferred back to their local school districts?**

Per an agreement with CWA, which has not yet been ratified at the time of this submission, DCF would be required to rescind the plan to close the 18 regional schools.

- **Do the tuition rates established by DOE and paid by local school districts include the cost of transportation?**

The educational tuition rate established by the DOE and paid by local school districts does not include the cost for transportation.

**With respect to the closing of the Somerset Regional School and the transfer of the children to the Middlesex Regional School, please provide information as to the number of children affected and the municipality of residence of each child.**

The Somerset Campus was providing education services to a maximum of 15 students who lived at one DCBHS group home in Somerville. The students in this group home were transferred to the Middlesex Campus.

#### **County Human Services Advisory Councils (HSAC):**

**Committee members raised various questions regarding the proposed elimination of administrative funding to the county HSACs.**

- **With respect to the administrative funding provided to each county HSAC, please provide information as to the amount of federal funding each county HSAC has been able to generate as a result of such State funding.**

DCF does not have official figures on the amount of federal funding each county has been able to generate as a result of the funding the state has provided to support each Human Service Advisory Council. Each county keeps a separate accounting of this information and would need to provide this information to the committee.

- **Please provide information on the following matters related to the HSACs:**

**Which counties have indicated that they may provide funding to offset the loss of administrative funding to their local HSAC? Which counties have indicated that they would not offset any HSAC funding reduction?**

While we have had informal conversations with County Human Service Directors about the effect of the funding reduction, any formal decisions regarding county funding would come from the respective county freeholder bodies, which are the government entities that would make the determination on any funds to offset the reductions.

**The department's formal comments as it relates to the readoption of regulations governing HSACs as specified during the budget hearing.**

The Department of Human Services (DHS) proposed amendments to its Contract Administration rules (N.J.A.C. 10:3-1 et seq.) in January 5, 2009 to establish new policies and procedures by which a division of DHS, the County Human Services Advisory Councils (HSACs) or other designated entity, let, evaluate and award contracts for third party social services or training. Those new procedures provide that only public employees may be the decision makers on contract issues. This is consistent with advice they have received from the Office of the Attorney General. While, DCF was not involved in this particular rulemaking, the decision to amend the rules in this manner is consistent with the contracting processes recently established by DCF.

The HSACs are also governed by N.J.A.C. 10:2, which sets forth the general requirements applicable to HSACS in their capacity as advisor to both Departments. DHS and DCF jointly readopted this rule in 2008. The chapter requires HSACS to allocate resources consistent with the provisions contained in N.J.A.C. 10:3.

**In addition to the regional schools and the HSAC's, the following senators raised the following questions:**

**Senator Cunningham:**

- **The department maintains an ongoing list of the top 100 children in terms of their time awaiting a permanent placement. Since the list's inception, how many children in total have been placed? Of the 100 children on the initial list, how many have been placed and what is their current placement status?**

The following statistics show the status of the original 100 children on the list:

**Permanent Plan Achieved (60%)**

- |  |          |
|--|----------|
| • Adoption Finalized/Case Closed                         | 20 teens |
| • Placed in an Adoptive Home, pending court finalization | 6 teens  |
| • Placed with Relative/Kin, pending Legal Guardianship   | 8 teens  |
| • Teen remaining with Foster Family                      | 6 teens  |
| • Re-Connected with Family*                              | 18 teens |
| • Teen has achieved Independence                         | 2 teens  |

**Permanent Placement Underway (16%)**

- |   |         |
|---|---------|
| • Visiting an Interested Adoptive Family          | 9 teens |
| • Case being processed for Foster Family Adoption | 1 teen  |
| • Family Home Study in process                    | 6 teens |

**Permanency Plan in Development (24%)**

- |                                      |          |
|--------------------------------------|----------|
| • Working on Specific Family Lead    | 10 teens |
| • Child Specific Recruitment ongoing | 14 teens |

\* Although the teens are not living with these family members, they visit frequently and maintain contact at will. These relationships add stability to the life of older teens by providing a personal, ongoing relationship within a family context.

**Senator Karrow:**

- **Please provide information as to the agencies that receive funds and the amount of funds each agency receives pursuant to budget language on D-43: After School Reading Initiative (\$400,000), After School Start-Up Fund (\$200,000), School Health Clinics (\$400,000) and Positive Youth Development (\$530,000).**

DCF's Division of Prevention and Community Partnerships (DPCP) funds thirty-eight agencies which operate 64 school-based Family Friendly Centers across the state. (See attached list of contract agencies and school sites.) These centers provide supplemental connections to social services and provide opportunities for cultural experiences and after school recreation and academic support, which includes homework and reading assistance.

DPCP funds the Jewish Renaissance Foundation a total of \$624,000 to operate five School Based Youth Services Health Centers in Newark at the following schools: Quitman Elementary School, Carver Elementary School, Dayton Elementary School, Shabazz High School and Barringer High School.

DPCP funds 69 high schools to support a Youth Development Specialist position in their School Based Youth Services Program. (See attached list of contract agencies operating the School Based Youth Services Program and the high schools in which they operate.)

**Senator O'Toole:**

- **Please provide information as to the total cost of out-of- state placements at present and three years ago.**

Following is the list of the cost of providing services to youth in out of state placements:

**DCF/DCBHS - Out of State Placement Expenditures  
as of 5/19/2009**

<u>Fiscal Year</u>	<u>Total Amt</u>	<u>Fed Amt</u>	<u>State Amt</u>
2006	\$ 36,213,413	\$ 15,838,996	\$ 20,374,417
2009	\$ 13,449,155	\$ 5,590,428	\$ 7,858,727

**Senator Redd:**

- **Please provide information on the following matters:**

**The number of children between the ages of 18-21 being served by the department at present and in the last few years**

The Division of Youth and Family Services (DYFS) was authorized to begin providing services to youth, ages 18-21, who are aging out of the foster care system in August 2004.

This chart provides information on the number of aging out youth who received services from 2005-2008.

<b>2005</b>	<b>1513</b>
<b>2006</b>	<b>1765</b>
<b>2007</b>	<b>1978</b>
<b>2008</b>	<b>1406</b>

### **The types of services being provided to such children**

DCF will continue to support youth in a foster home until the age of 21 and provide subsidy support to foster parent(s). Further, DCF has made it a priority to continue to pursue permanency for older youth who are aging out of the foster care system, ranging from adoption, reunification, Kinship Legal Guardianship (KLG) or a connection to a network of caring adults who agree to support the youth. At the same time, we provide an array of services and supports to help prepare aging out youth for independent living. These services and supports include:

- **Life Skills Training:** DCF works with four agencies to provide daily living skills, including budgeting and financial management, decision-making, communications, etc.
- **Employment Readiness:** DCF's transitional programs provide career counseling, employability skills, direct assistance with applying and interviewing for jobs, Youth Corp positions, etc. DCF and Casey Family Programs are also collaborating on a project to improve the job readiness aspects of the current life-skills/transitional programs and better connect aging out youth with their local One Stop Center, which can be an ongoing resource.
- **Housing & Living Expenses:** There are several housing options available to youth who are aging out and they include transitional living programs where youth may reside for a certain amount of time and others considered more permanent, allowing the young adult to stay in the supported housing until they are ready to move on. For some aged out youth, DYFS will also provide living stipends for food and rent.
- **Education:** The NJ Scholars program provides scholarships for expenses not covered by other available funding sources, such as federal aid, for post high school academic and vocational studies. Items covered may include tuition, room and board, books, fees, supplies, transportation and child care costs.
- **Health:** Aging out youth are eligible to obtain a Medicaid extension so their health benefits may continue beyond age 18 if they were in placement on their 18<sup>th</sup> birthday. This extension remains valid until they reach the age of 21.
- **Advocacy:** There are 13 Youth Advisory Boards located throughout the state which provide our youth an opportunity to provide input and feedback on adolescent programming and policy to DYFS management and staff.

## Placement of sibling groups

One of DCF's priority areas for resource family recruitment is for homes that will accept sibling groups and allow us to keep brothers and sisters together. In 2003, 51 percent of sibling groups consisting of 2-3 children were placed together. In 2008, 73 percent of sibling groups of 2-3 children were placed together. For sibling groups consisting of 4 or more children, 26 percent were placed together in 2003 and that percentage increased to 33.0 percent in 2008.

### Senator Turner:

- **Please provide copies of any reports on the death of Jamal Cruz (sic.) to the extent permitted by State and federal confidentiality laws, when available, and any changes to department policies and procedures that result from such reports.**

The New Jersey Fatality and Near Fatality Review Board produces an annual report that provides recommendations on DCF policies and procedures based on its review of child fatalities and near fatalities. DCF can provide a copy once it is released by this Review Board.

- **Please provide information on the following matters:**  
(a) **The cost of residential placements in private residential facilities.**

The following are payments or expenditures for youth placed in private residential treatment programs by DCF or DCBHS:

<u>Fiscal Year</u>	<u>Paid Amt</u>	<u>Fed</u>	<u>State</u>
FY2009 (as of 05/18/09)	\$ 186,294,068	\$ 61,979,051	\$ 124,315,018

- (b) **The amount the department expends on so-called "psycho-social" medications.**

The cost of these medications for FY '08 was \$6.9m and for FY '09 the projected amount is \$6.8m.

- (c) **The states in which the 76 children in out-of home placement are located.**

<u>State</u>	<u># of Children</u>
PA	57
VA	2
FL	8
GA	3
SC	1
TN	1
NH	2
IL	1
NY	1
<b>Total</b>	<b>76</b>

**(d) The amount expended on providing transportation to parents to visit their children.**

DCBHS expended approximately \$25,000 in FY '08 to assist parents in travel to see children in out of state programs.

**(e) The number of child abuse investigations that occurred in the following settings: foster homes, adoptive families, Juvenile Justice Commission facilities, detention centers and other residential settings, and provide information on the activities of the institutional abuse and investigation unit.**

DCF's Institutional Abuse Investigation Unit Investigators (IAIU) conduct thorough investigations of child abuse/neglect in out-of-home settings, including but not limited to institutional settings, such as residential facilities, day schools, child care centers and DYFS resource family homes. Investigators must complete their assigned investigations within 60 calendar days. Investigators are required to make in-person contact with the child victim within the mandated response time. During the course of an investigation, investigators are required to interview a variety of individuals with relevant information pertinent to the investigation (internal system partners, administrators, staff and child witnesses, collateral contacts and medical professionals etc.).

In addition, an investigator must notify the appropriate law enforcement entity as required in accordance with agency policy. Upon completion of an investigation, IAIU determines the allegations to be either substantiated or unfounded based on the preponderance of evidence gathered.

The IAIU monitors the corrective/disciplinary action taken by the facilities and ensures compliance by collaborating with their system partners that have regulatory authority over the facilities.

Following is a breakdown of the 2008 IAIU Statewide Cases based on the type of facility where the investigation occurred:

Correctional Facility	56
Detention Centers	92
Group Homes	103
Residential Centers	266
Resource Family Homes	<u>937</u>
Total	1454

## FAMILY FRIENDLY CENTERS

AGENCY	FY'09 FUNDING	SCHOOL
ASPIRA	\$90,926	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Rafael Cordero Molina School (Camden)</li> <li>• Public School #5 (Jersey City)</li> </ul>
Atlantic Care	\$90,926	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Warren Sooy School &amp; Uptown School</li> <li>• Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. School/Family Center</li> </ul>
BASC Network	\$45,463	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Campbell School</li> <li>• Moss School</li> </ul>
Babyland Family Service	\$136,388	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Dr. E. Alma Flagg School</li> <li>• 13<sup>th</sup> Avenue School</li> <li>• Dayton School</li> </ul>
Bergenfield Outreach	\$45,463	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Hoover School</li> <li>• Roy Brown Middle School</li> </ul>
Brookdale College	\$45,463	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Neptune Middle School</li> </ul>
Catholic Charities	\$136,390	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Weston School</li> <li>• VanDerveer School #10</li> <li>• Willow Grove School</li> </ul>
Catholic Family & Community Service	\$45,463	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Eastside High School</li> </ul>
Center for Family Resources	\$45,463	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ryerson Middle School</li> </ul>
Cherry Hill Board of Education	\$45,463	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Thomas Paine School</li> <li>• Joyce Kilmer School</li> </ul>
Clayton Board of Education	\$45,463	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Herma Simmons Elementary School</li> </ul>
Communities in Schools of Newark	\$45,463	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• William H. Brown Academy</li> </ul>
Community YMCA	\$45,463	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Bradley Elementary</li> </ul>
East Orange YMCA	\$45,463	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Mildred Barry Garvin Elementary East</li> </ul>
Hackensack Board of Education	\$45,463	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Jackson Avenue School</li> </ul>
Harrison Board of Education	\$45,463	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Washington Middle School</li> </ul>
Hoboken Board of Education	\$45,463	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Connors School</li> </ul>
Ironbound Community Corp.	\$45,463	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Hawkins Street School</li> </ul>
Keansburg Board of Education	\$45,463	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Caruso School</li> </ul>
La Casa de Don Pedro	\$45,463	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Franklin Elementary School</li> </ul>
Millville Board of Education	\$90,924	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Maurice River School</li> <li>• RD Wood School</li> <li>• Rieck Avenue School</li> <li>• Silver Run School</li> <li>• Lakeside Middle School</li> <li>• Mt. Pleasant School</li> <li>• RM Bacon School</li> </ul>
Mt. Olive Child Care	\$45,463	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Chester Stephens School</li> <li>• Mt. Olive Middle School</li> <li>• Mt. View Elementary School</li> <li>• Sanshore Elementary School</li> <li>• Tine Road Elementary School</li> </ul>

## FAMILY FRIENDLY CENTERS

AGENCY	FY'09 FUNDING	SCHOOL
New Brunswick Tomorrow	\$45,463	• Chester Redshaw
New Community Corp.	\$45,463	• Newton Street School
NJCDC	\$45,463	• Public School #2
Paterson YMCA	\$45,463	• Public School #20
Plainfield Board of Education	\$90,926	• Emerson School • Jefferson School
Preferred Children's Services	\$45,463	• Oak Street School
Princeton YMCA	\$45,463	• Johnson Park School • Littlebrook School
Puerto Rican Association	\$45,463	• Robert N. Wilentz School
Salem City board of Education	\$45,463	• John Fenwick School
South Brunswick Board of Education	\$45,463	• Crossroads Middle School
The Connection for Women and Families	\$45,463	• Jefferson School • Lincoln-Hubbard School • Washington School • Brayton School
Tri-City Peoples	\$45,463	• South 17 <sup>th</sup> School
Unified Vailsburg	\$90,926	• Boylan Street School • Mt. Vernon School • Speedway School
Union City Board of Education	\$45,463	• Roosevelt School
Vineland Board of Education	\$45,463	• Cunningham Elementary School
YMCA of Western Monmouth	\$45,463	• Park Avenue School

**List of School Based Youth Services Programs  
Funded for a Youth Development Specialist**

Asbury Park Board of Ed	Asbury Park HS
Atlanticare Behavioral Health Inc	Atlantic City HS
Atlanticare Behavioral Health Inc	Buena Regional HS
Atlanticare Behavioral Health Inc	Oakcrest HS
Bayonne Board of Ed	Bayonne High School
Bergen Family Center	Dwight Morrow HS
Camden City Board of Ed	Camden City HS
Camden City Board of Ed	Woodrow Wilson HS
Cape Counseling Services, Inc	Cape May County Tech
Cape Counseling Services, Inc	Lower Cape May Regional
Carteret Board of Education	Carteret High School
Children's Hospital of NJ	Barringer High School
City of Paterson	Kennedy High School
Clayton Board of Ed	Clayton JR/SR HS
Community Health Care Inc	Bridgeton HS, Broad St & Downe Twp
Community Health Care Inc	Cumberland Regional HS
Dover Board of Ed	Dover High School
Drenk Behavioral Health	Pemberton HS
Education Info. & Resource Center	Willingboro High School
Family Connections	Columbia High School
Family Connections	Orange High School
Family Connections	Bloomfield High School
Family Guidance Center of Warren County	Warren Hills Regional HS
Family Service Assoc. Atlantic	Egg Harbor Township HS
Family Service Assoc. Atlantic	Pleasantville HS
Family Services - Burlington	Burlington City HS
Gloucester County Spec Svcs	Gloucester County Tech
Hackensack Board of Education	Hackensack HS
Harrison Board of Ed	Harrison High School
Highland Park Board of Ed	Highland Park HS
Hoboken Public Schools	Hoboken High School
Hunterdon Medical Center	Hunterdon Central Regional HS
Jersey City Medical Center	Snyder High School
Jewish Renaissance Foundation	Perth Amboy HS
Keansburg Board of Ed	Keansburg HS
Kearny Board of Ed	Kearny High School
Long Branch Board of Ed	Long Branch HS
Manchester Reg. HS	Manchester High School
Mental Health of Passaic	Passiac High School
Mercer Council on Alco. & Drug Add.	Ewing High School
New Brunswick Tomorrow	New Brunswick HS
NJ Community Development Corp.	Clifton HS
NJ Community Development Corp.	Passaic Valley
NJ Community Development Corp.	Passaic County Vo-Tech

Phillipsburg Board of Ed	Phillipsburg HS
Pinelands Reg. School District	Pinelands Regional HS
Plainfield Board of Ed	Plainfield HS
Preferred Children's Service	Brick Memorial HS
Preferred Children's Service	Brick Township HS
Preferred Children's Service	Lakewood High School
Red Bank Reg. HS	Red Bank Regional HS
Salem City Board of Ed	Salem City High School
Salem County Board for Voc. Ed	Salem County Vo-Tech
Somerset County Voc. and Tech	Somerset County
South Jersey Healthcare	Millville High School
South Jersey Healthcare	Vineland High School
Sussex County Tech. School	Sussex County
Teaneck Board of Education	Teaneck High School
The Bridge, Inc.	Irvington High School
Trenton Board of Ed	Trenton High School
Trinitas Hospital	Thomas Jefferson
Trinitas Hospital	Abraham Clark
Trinitas Hospital	William S Halsey House
Union City Board of Ed	Union Hill HS
Union City Board of Ed	Emerson HS (Union City)
University of Beh. Health (UMDNJ)	South Brunswick HS
University of Med. & Den. of NJ	Newark Tech Career CNT
Winslow Board of Ed	Winslow Township HS
Youth Consultation Services	East Side HS