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Report to the Governor of Maryland on the Implementation of Education Article § 22-303 February 1, 2014

Background

Education Article § 22-303 requires that the Maryland State Department of Education (MSDE) develop and implement juvenile services educational programs at all residential facilities of the Department of Juvenile Services (DJS) initially by July 1, 2012, and then extended by legislative action to July 1, 2014. § 22-303 further required that MSDE report to the Governor and the General Assembly on the implementation of the requirement beginning in February 2006, and every other year thereafter.

The legislation stemmed from reports and concerns that youth in these facilities were receiving limited education services in settings not meeting the standards for programs in the public schools. Since 2004, MSDE and DJS have worked collaboratively to transition the educational programs in six detention centers and open an educational program in the re-established Victor Cullen Treatment Center.

As MSDE assumed responsibility for these programs, it has ensured: adequate staff to provide students with access to core academics as well as instruction in Career and Technology Education and life skills/career development over the course of the required six-hour school day; full compliance with the requirements of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act; and student attendance in school in a facility that meets the standards for public schools in the State. Schools are staffed with certified teachers and administrators. An accountability program promotes student achievement and continuous improvement of student outcomes.

Progress to Date

FY 2005

On July 1, 2004, MSDE assumed responsibility for the education program at the Charles H. Hickey, Jr. School. It consisted of three components, one for the detention population, one for the short term Impact Program, and one for the longer-term Enhanced Security youth. The education program offerings at Hickey included academic, occupational, life skills, special education, library/media, and career development services. In July 2005, the Administration announced the impending closures of the Impact and Enhanced Security Programs. Since November 30, 2005, MSDE has operated an expanded detention program at the facility incorporating the program elements described above to serve 72 students on a daily basis.

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FY 2006

On July 1, 2005, MSDE assumed responsibility for the education program at the Lower Eastern Shore Children's Center. The facility is a 24-bed detention unit. The educational program is similar to that offered at the Charles H. Hickey, Jr. detention school.

MSDE assumed responsibility for the education program at the Baltimore City Juvenile Justice Center (BCJJC) on January 4, 2006. Staff and instructional materials were transferred from Hickey to BCJJC where MSDE now serves 120 students daily.

FY 2007

In FY 2007, MSDE continued to administer the educational programming at Charles H. Hickey, Lower Eastern Shore and the Baltimore City Juvenile Justice Center. MSDE worked diligently during FY 2007 to expand as well as enhance the educational programming at BCJJC in an effort to deliver optimal instructional and occupational programming to the residents of the facility.

FY 2008

MSDE assumed responsibility for the educational program at J. DeWeese Carter Children's Center on July 1, 2007. Funds were provided in the FY 2008 budget for additional staff, a relocatable education building, instructional materials and equipment in order to add this site to the MSDE Juvenile Services Education Program. In November 2011, the Carter Center became the site of the DJS Treatment Center for girls.

The reopening of the Victor Cullen facility in July 2007 added an additional MSDE educational program. Initially, funds for staff, a relocatable education building, and instructional materials and equipment were provided through a Memorandum of Agreement (MOA) between MSDE and DJS. This MOA provided the funding needed to develop and implement the educational program for Victor Cullen since funds were not provided in MSDE's FY 2008 budget. The Governor's Allowance for FY 2009 included ongoing resources for the Cullen site. The Cullen educational program provides daily instruction in the core subject areas as well as Career and Technology Education in electrical wiring for the 48 youth residing at the facility.

FY 2009-2010

The Juvenile Services Education Program served approximately 300 students on a daily basis. Funds were not appropriated for MSDE to assume additional school sites in these two fiscal years. During the 2009 General Assembly session, the deadline for assuming responsibility for all Department of Juvenile Services' residential facilities educational programming was extended to July 1, 2014. To prepare for meeting the new deadline, the MSDE Juvenile Services Education program conducted physical site visits and needs assessments of the DJS residential education programs not yet assumed.

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FY 2011

MSDE assumed responsibility for the educational program at the Western Maryland Children's Center (WMCC) on July 1, 2010. Program offerings at the WMCC include Reading/Language Arts, Mathematics, Science, Social Studies, and Life Skills. The staff at the facility consisted of two core content teachers, one special education teacher, a guidance counselor, one instructional assistant, an office secretary/records clerk, and the principal who also provides administrative oversight for the Victor Cullen Center.

FY 2012

Legislative action during the 2011 session required that MSDE assume responsibility for the educational program at Cheltenham Youth Facility (CYF) in October 2011. MSDE and the Department of Juvenile Services (DJS) collaborated in the transfer of the program to MSDE effective October 5, 2011. At the request of the General Assembly, MSDE assumed the program without any additional resources.

FY 2013

MSDE expanded its Juvenile Services Education Program by assuming responsibility for the educational programming in the seven remaining DJS residential facilities. The assumption process employed during fiscal year 2013 involved coordinated planning between both JSE and DJS leadership across the state. Both agencies invested significant effort and time to ensure each site was successfully transitioned to MSDE. A deficiency appropriation provided resources for five additional teaching staff, instructional materials, and equipment for the assumption of the programs at Waxter, Schaefer House, and Noyes.

Thomas J.S. Waxter Children's Center was assumed on August 22, 2012. DJS provided an additional relocatable education building to offer contiguous space near the existing relocatable classrooms for a principal's office as well as quiet space for guidance and special education services. Program offerings and the staffing pattern mirrors that in other JSE detention sites.

William Donald Schaefer House, assumed on October 20, 2012, is challenged with establishing adequate space for educational programming. The school is limited in its ability to create a library media center, provide Career and Technology Education options, and struggles with identifying quiet space for assessing student achievement levels in preparation for entry into the instructional program and transition back to the community. The school is staffed with two core content teachers, a special educator, an instructional assistant, and a guidance counselor. The principal for Charles H. Hickey has the dual responsibility of serving as the administrator for William Donald Schaefer House.

Alfred D. Noyes Children's Center was assumed on January 9, 2013. The staff consists of four content area teachers, one career and technology education instruction teacher, two special educators, one guidance counselor, an office secretary/records staff member,

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and a principal. The program's library media center also allows for instruction in computer literacy for all students.

Backbone Mountain Youth Center, Green Ridge Youth Center, Savage Mountain Youth Center, and Meadow Mountain Youth Center were assumed on June 26, 2013. The instructional program mirrors that at MSDE's schools in DJS Treatment Centers. With support from DJS the post-secondary program continues for designated youth at Backbone Mountain through a partnership with Garrett Community College.

Each of the four sites has extremely limited instructional space. These limitations hamper MSDE's ability to provide a robust instructional program that includes diverse Career and Technology Education offerings and expanded opportunities for students to earn a high school diploma while in these treatment facilities. MSDE is greatly appreciative of the support and work from DJS maintenance and administrative staff to repair and renovate classrooms to better meet the needs of the instructional program. Instructional space remains severely limited.

In virtually all sites, the educational programs require additional facility space to ensure said programs meet the requirements of federal and state statutes and are operated in accordance with regulations.

Next Steps

With the assumptions now completed, the JSE program is directing its energies and resources to ensuring effective implementation of the new College and Career Ready Standards (CCRS), expanding Career and Technology Education offerings, and exploring additional postsecondary offerings – all designed to ensure that JSE students are readied for return to their communities and to be successful in their next educational and career preparation steps. Accelerating student achievement in mathematics and reading will continue as a priority as the program works to keep its students on track to earning high school diplomas and earning industry certifications. A new student information system and Internet connectivity will better communicate student outcomes and enhance student transition. The rapidity by which staff have been added with the assumption of the seven new sites necessitates targeted, ongoing professional development for the new teachers and principals to ensure highly effective teachers and leaders in the JSE schools.

JSE's successful accomplishment of these programmatic initiatives will require ongoing investment of resources to ensure its schools have up to date instructional materials, supplies, and equipment; additional staff and equipment for Career and Technology Education programs; opportunities for digital learning; and postsecondary opportunities for students. Classroom space remains the most significant challenge, particularly at the four Youth Centers in Western Maryland and the William Donald Schaefer House. This is particularly troublesome since these are five of the seven sites where students have longer lengths of stay and where the JSE program can play a more significant role in furthering student college and career preparation. Addressing these challenges will remain a JSE priority.