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J. WALTER WOOD, JR.
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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STEVEN P. LAFRENIERE APPOINTED EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR OF DYS

MONTGOMERY- The Alabama Department of Youth Services announces the appointment of Mr. Steven P. Lafreniere to the position of executive director, effective July 1, 2014. The Youth Services Board selected Mr. Lafreniere at a special called public meeting on April 25, 2014.

The Youth Services Board stated its intention to continue reform efforts regarding improving the way the state's juvenile justice system treats delinquent youth. Mr. Lafreniere has extensive experience in providing leadership in the design, implementation and oversight of community based service systems. While employed with the Department of Mental Health he served as the Director of Community Services for the Division of Developmental Disabilities. This position was responsible for supervising the operations of five Regional Community Services Offices across the state, Early Intervention, Autism and Children's Services within the Division.

Mr. Lafreniere offers skill and experience working on state juvenile justice issues, development of non-residential diversion programs, and in the day to day operation of state institutions for delinquent children. He served for eleven years as Director of Children's Services for the Department of Mental Health. During that time, he also served on the DYS Board as proxy for ten years for three different commissioners. He is very familiar with the transformative initiatives and direction the department has taken over this time. He also served on the Youth Services Board's Education Committee and is very familiar with the unique challenges and successes the Youth Services School District has experienced.

Mr. Lafreniere holds a Bachelor of Arts degree from Auburn University and a Master's of Science/Clinical Psychology from Auburn University Montgomery.

Mr. Lafreniere is excited about his new role, and feels "the Director of the Department of Youth Services must work hard to maintain the transformative, qualitative systematic gains and respect that has been achieved by the DYS Board and staff over the years. At the same time, he must build upon this success in the midst of fiscal challenges within the state budgets; a popular impression that delinquent youth just need to be 'locked up' and an ever changing landscape in state and local leadership. I believe the experience, knowledge and skills I have obtained over my career not only in the mental health and juvenile justice systems, but all inter-related state and local child serving systems, uniquely prepares me for this position."

Current DYS Executive Director J. Walter Wood, Jr. is retiring July 1 after serving in the position for 15 years. At his retirement, he was the longest tenured leader of a state juvenile justice system in the country.