



# **FY 2022 ANNUAL REPORT**

**Alabama Department of Youth Services**



# Our Mission

To be a life changing resource for youth involved in the justice system by providing quality educational opportunities, services, and supports to reduce reoffending, improve positive outcomes, strengthen families, and enhance community safety.







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## Our Vision

To connect with youth involved in the justice system and to change the trajectory of their lives.

# Our Values

## **Safety & Accountability**

We believe a safe environment is everyone's responsibility and is foundational for individual and programmatic success.

## **Character & Integrity**

We believe the behavior we desire in others should first be seen through our own actions.

## **Communication & Collaboration**

We share ideas freely and courageously. We embrace the potential of new ideas and approaches.

## **Respect & Connection**

We believe youth and staff become meaningfully engaged through respectful relationships that are consistent, compassionate, and fair.

## **Empowerment & Discovery**

We create opportunities for others to learn, engage, and transform.

## **Equity & Inclusion**

We embrace our diversity, believing it transforms us and our community.

## **Transparency & Excellence**

We are committed to being informed by data to improve the quality of our efforts and accountability to our stakeholders.



## *From the Executive Director*

Dear Governor Ivey,

On behalf of the Alabama Department of Youth Services (DYS), I am pleased to present you with the DYS Fiscal Year 2022 Annual Report. This year represented a year of change and renewed vision for our agency. We began the year with a commitment to the development and implementation of an agency wide three-year strategic plan. We also reviewed and revised our agency's mission, vision, and values to better reflect who we are now and where we want to go in the future.

This change continued as we transitioned all senior leadership roles in the agency. We said goodbye to our three Deputy Directors and School Superintendent who all retired from state government. These dedicated servants represented 140 years of service to the state of Alabama. We would also like to welcome our new leadership and are excited to have them on our team.

In FY22', DYS was recognized for our leadership nationally and began an initiative to identify and develop leaders from our ranks. We celebrated our Mt. Meigs Campus for being selected as the 2022 Corrections Winner of the Barbara Allen-Hagen Award. This award is given annually to one juvenile corrections facility who exhibits significant improvement over time. DYS also developed and implemented the first Leadership Academy for staff. The Academy is designed and structured to prepare our staff for additional leadership opportunities. As we continue to struggle to recruit and retain staff, it is important for us to continue to invest in our employees and provide them with the resources and support they need to succeed.

This fiscal year also saw the completed new construction and renovations on the Mt. Meigs Campus. The new Student Development Building and the new Intensive Treatment Unit will allow for youth to have a more therapeutic and rehabilitative environment. The renovations to Wallace School provided much-needed revitalizations to the school classrooms and gymnasium.

I encourage you and others to review our FY 2022 Annual Report for additional highlights. We continue to be thankful for the support and encouragement we receive from our stakeholders and the community at large. We would like to thank our staff, volunteers, and provider and community partners. This work could not be accomplished without them. We continue to be grateful to this administration, the legislature, the court system, and the DYS Board of Directors for their continued support. Our agency will continue to work to fulfill our mission and our vision for the future. We will always strive to connect with youth involved in the justice system and to change the trajectory of their lives.

Respectfully Submitted,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Steven P. Lafreniere".

Steven P. Lafreniere



# DYS Board of Directors

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## OFFICE OF THE GOVERNOR

**HONORABLE KAY IVEY**  
GOVERNOR

**JONATHAN HESTER**  
**MARY KATHERINE PITTMAN**  
GOVERNOR'S REPRESENTATIVES

## LEGISLATIVE APPOINTMENTS

**SENATOR WILL BARFOOT**

**SENATOR LINDA COLEMAN-MADISON**

**REPRESENTATIVE BARBARA BOYD**

**REPRESENTATIVE K.L. BROWN**

## ALABAMA JUVENILE JUDGES ASSOCIATION

**HONORABLE PATRICIA DEMOS**

## ALABAMA CHIEF PROBATION OFFICERS ASSOCIATION

**CRISSY GRIFFIN**

## STATE DEPARTMENT HEADS

**KIM BOSWELL, COMMISSIONER**  
AL Dept. of Mental Health  
Proxy: Kim Hammack

**KENNETH BOSWELL, DIRECTOR**  
AL Dept. of Economic and Community Affairs  
Proxy: William Babington

**NANCY BUCKNER, COMMISSIONER**  
AL Dept. of Human Resources  
Proxy: Shea Cobb-England

**DR. SCOTT HARRIS, STATE HEALTH OFFICER**  
AL Dept. of Public Health  
Proxy: Michele Jones

**DR. ERIC MACKEY, STATE SUPERINTENDENT**  
AL Dept. of Education  
Proxy: Jason Swann



# **DYS Board of Directors**

## **CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT APPOINTMENTS**

**PHILLIP WYNNE**

**1ST CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT**

**JAMES DUPREE**

**2ND CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT**

**CHARLES SMITH**

**3RD CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT**

**STACIE JENKINS**

**4TH CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT**

**WILLIAM MCDOWELL**

**5TH CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT**

**BUDDY AYDELETTE**

**6TH CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT**

**ROBERT DUKE**

**7TH CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT**

## **DYS OFFICERS OF THE BOARD**



**MICHELE JONES**  
**VICE CHAIR**



**CHARLES SMITH**  
**CHAIR**



**WILLIAM MCDOWELL**  
**SECRETARY/TREASURER**

# *Report of the Board .....*

The Youth Services Board met three times during fiscal year 2022: **December 3, 2021, April 1, 2022, and August 26, 2022.** Each of the meetings were held in person, rather than remotely, in the Board Room of Washington Hall, Mount Meigs, Alabama.

## **COVID-19 Impacts Continue into FY 2022**

At each of the meetings, Mr. Steve Lafreniere, Executive Director, updated the Board on the impacts of COVID-19 on DYS. In December 2021, masks were still required for both students and staff for indoor activities and in common areas, but not required in offices or outdoors. All youth were tested at intake and when symptoms were reported. The most recent positive COVID test occurred in October 2021 at the Autauga Campus. By late December 2021, a significant outbreak of COVID occurred across DYS facilities. Fifty-two (52) youth and 37 staff tested positive. By early February, positive tests were not reported. Through the sharing of staff, additional testing, and quarantine units within the facilities, the impact of COVID-19 was substantially reduced by the end of the fiscal year.

## **Staffing Remains a Challenge**

The ability to recruit and retain staff remains a major challenge within DYS. Steve Lafreniere, Executive Director, and Alesia Allen, Deputy Director of Institutional Services, updated the Board at each meeting. An example highlighting the challenge, in the last six months of the year, 43 new employees were hired, but 44 employees left DYS. These included 7 dismissals, 5 retirements, 26 resignations, and 6 transfers to other state agencies. Efforts are ongoing to hire additional employees, especially direct care staff. The Department regularly participates in job fairs and an advertising campaign was initiated. Entry salaries for line staff were increased by two steps (approximately 5%). Major staffing schedule changes were also implemented. Exit interviews with departing employees found that the mandatory overtime was a major issue. By August 2022, work schedules for direct staff were moved to four 10-hour work days. These shift changes reduce the amount of required overtime and provide for direct care staff to have some weekends off each month.

## **Strategic Planning Efforts**

During the April meeting, Mr. Lafreniere highlighted the Department's strategic plan for the next three years. The plan was developed with input from approximately 300 stakeholders including Board Members, judges, and employees. The mission, vision, and values of the Department were updated and distributed to the key stakeholders. The mission, vision, and value statements will serve as a roadmap for DYS to accomplish future goals.

## **Mt. Meigs Campus Receives National PbS Award**

At the August 26th meeting, Mr. Lafreniere recognized the Mt. Meigs Campus for having received the Performance-based Standards (PbS) Barbara Allen Hagan Award. Several hundred juvenile correctional programs across the United States participate in the program, and Mt. Meigs Campus was selected as the Correctional Program winner for 2022. Campus staff received the award during the National PbS Conference in New Orleans. DYS has participated in PbS for six years with the goal of utilizing continuous quality improvement to improve the conditions of confinement within DYS facilities. The Board viewed a six-minute video produced by PbS that highlighted the accomplishments of the Mt. Meigs Campus. Following the video, Mr. Lafreniere recognized the efforts of Dr. Shannon Weston, Executive Assistant to the Director, for her leadership of the PbS process for the last six years.



## **Major Changes in Departmental Leadership During FY 2022**

FY 2022 was marked by the retirement of all three Deputy Director positions and the Superintendent of the Youth Services School District. During the December meeting, Mr. Lafreniere recognized the upcoming retirement of Mr. David Rogers, Deputy Director of Administration, and Ms. Janice Lewis, Deputy Director of Institutional Services. During the April meeting, Mr. Pat Pendergast's retirement as Deputy Director for Community Services was announced. In addition, Dr. Rafael Richardson, Superintendent of Education announced that he would be retiring at the end of the 2021 school year. By the end of the fiscal year, Ms. Alesia Allen was appointed as the Deputy Director for Institutional Services, Mr. Shawn Stinson was appointed as Deputy Director for Administration and Contract Services, and Dr. Tracy Smitherman was appointed as Superintendent of the Youth Services School District. Both Ms. Allen and Dr. Smitherman are long-term DYS employees.

## **Highlighting Achievements of the 2021-2022 Fiscal Year**

During the August meeting, Mr. Lafreniere took the opportunity to point out that although there were many challenges and changes that occurred during the year, "the good work on the campuses continues, employees are still turning out good work, and the young people are receiving the services they need. We still have GEDs and diplomas being awarded, and students are graduating from job readiness programs. These things couldn't be accomplished without the dedicated, hard working employees of the Department."

## **Officers of the Board Elected**

As is customary at the last Board meeting of the calendar year, officers were elected for the upcoming year. Officers of the Board elected for 2022 include:

**Mr. Charles Smith – Chairman**

**Ms. Michele Jones – Vice-Chair**

**Mr. William McDowell – Secretary/Treasurer**



# Leadership in Action



## Mt. Meigs Campus Receives the National PbS Barbara Allen-Hagen Award

On Friday, August 5th, DYS staff participated in the Annual PbS Awards Night Banquet in New Orleans, LA. The Mt. Meigs Campus was nominated and selected as the 2022 Corrections Winner for the National PbS Barbara Allen-Hagen Award. The Mt. Meigs and DYS Central Office staff who attended the banquet included Steve Lafreniere, Alesia Allen, Shannon Weston, James White, Carol Davis, Allen Peaton, Marique Ruffin, Arnea Linden, Tonya Dorn, Tonya Wilson, Paulette Underwood, Angelia Brooks, Mark Baynard, Stephanie Norris, and Carlton Robinson. During the awards banquet, DYS staff viewed a compilation video of the campus produced by PbS prior to taking the stage to receive their award.

Also, while in New Orleans, DYS staff were able to hear from national leaders as it relates to juvenile justice and best practices. DYS Mt. Meigs and Central Office staff participated in the American Correctional Association Annual Conference. Dr. Shannon Weston attended the annual PbS State Coordinators Training, and Steve Lafreniere and Alesia Allen participated in the Council of Juvenile Justice Administrators Summer Business meeting. Receiving the national PbS Barbara Allen-Hagen award and participating in the annual conferences/meetings was a rewarding and beneficial experience for DYS staff.







Pictured above L to R:

Brett Peterson  
Vice President of CJJA

Steve Lafreniere  
President of CJJA

Mike Dempsey  
Executive Director of CJJA

Christine Blessinger  
Secretary of CJJA

Tyrone Oliver  
Treasurer of CJJA

## **Executive Director Steve Lafreniere Completes Term as President of the Council of Juvenile Justice Administrators**

Steve Lafreniere, Executive Director of DYS, completed his two year term as President of the Council of Juvenile Justice Administrators (CJJA) in August 2022. CJJA is a national non-profit organization created to improve juvenile justice systems, enhance local correctional and residential facilities and programs and, most importantly, promote better long term outcomes for youth and their families. CJJA represents the state juvenile justice system CEOs and various local jurisdictions across the country.

Prior to his appointment as President, Mr. Lafreniere served on the CJJA Executive Council as Vice President and Treasurer. Mr. Lafreniere has served on the CJJA Board since 2016 in various capacities including Chair of the Behavioral Health Committee and Chair of the South Regional Committee. He has also presented training for CJJA in their New Director Training.

# Leading by Example



## **Ms. Melanie Moore** 2022 DYS *Employee of the Year*

Ms. Melanie Moore has been a valued employee of the department for 17 years and is currently the Team Leader of Phyfer A. Ms. Moore and has proven to be an asset to DYS. Ms. Moore promotes a healthy and safe environment for the students and staff at the Mt. Meigs Campus. She performs a variety of duties including Control Force Instructor, MANDT Instructor, Search Team, and Juvenile Response Team Member. In addition, she also shares her knowledge and years of experience with training new employees and/or long-term employees seeking leadership roles.

Ms. Moore is a team player and is willing to work any shift, including weekends or holidays. She works various shifts to ensure new staff are trained

and receive guidance. Ms. Moore works additional shifts when her staff request time off in order to ensure her staff have a healthy work life balance. She has always stated a good team is lead by example.

Ms. Moore assists her fellow co-workers and other staff members on campus with any type of behavioral issues involving the students. She engages with students by refocusing them to get them back on the right track. Ms. Moore displays a passion for the youth and she takes time to visit her students in their classrooms at Wallace School and GED/Trade classes.

Ms. Moore makes sure each student in her living unit is treated with respect and cares for them like they are her own. Her enthusiasm, her innovativeness, and her genuine concern for the students we serve and her coworkers are exemplary.



Pictured L to R: Ms. Marique Ruffin, Mt. Meigs Campus Administrator, Ms. Tonya Dorn, Employee Council Chair, Ms. Melanie Moore, Employee of the Year, and Mr. Steve Lafreniere, Executive Director.



# 2022 DYS *Employees* of the Quarter



## **Ms. Felicia Whitted**

**Ms. Felicia Whitted**, Youth Services Aide for the ITU dorm, was selected as the DYS Employee of the Quarter for December 2021. Ms. Whitted began her employment with DYS in June of 2000 and retired in 2022. DYS mourned the loss of Ms. Whitted in her passing during the Fall of 2022. She was loved by both youth and staff. She served as a dedicated, devoted, hard worker who brought joy to the students. Ms. Whitted greeted all who entered ITU with a bright smile. We will forever miss Felicia Whitted.



## **Ms. Alfreda Williams**

**Ms. Alfreda Williams**, Youth Services Aide at the Mt. Meigs Campus, was selected as the DYS Employee of the Quarter for March 2022. Ms. Williams exemplifies what it means to be a great employee. During her years of service, Ms. Williams has gone above and beyond the call of duty. Ms. Williams actively listens to the concerns of the youth. She consistently encourages youth to make wise choices and to think before reacting. She also encourages them to develop goals to prepare for their release. Ms. Williams is consistent, has a good rapport with the students, and sets a positive example for other staff.



## **Mr. Tyler Frost**

**Mr. Tyler Frost**, Youth Services Aide at the Autauga Campus, was selected as the DYS Employee of the Quarter for June 2022. Mr. Frost exemplifies consistency and displays dependability and enthusiasm for working with the youth and his coworkers. Mr. Frost is always willing to help and never hesitates to work overtime if that is what is needed. He coordinates with the Activity Coordinator to ensure the activities are completed on schedule. He motivates the youth and provides mentoring to them throughout the program. Mr. Frost builds relationships with the youth through physical fitness. He is able to also take the time to build a fruitful working relationship with staff.



## **Mr. Perry Jamison**

**Mr. Perry Jamison**, Youth Services Aide at the Mt. Meigs Campus, was selected as the DYS Employee of the Quarter for September 2022. Mr. Jamison has an outstanding work ethic, has an impeccable attendance record, and easily gets along with youth and co-workers. He is dependable, respectful, and resourceful. His interactions with the youth demonstrate his skills in communication, attentiveness, impartiality, and reactive thinking to resolve issues quickly without incident. He mentors the youth by helping them understand that certain actions create consequences and how to think before reacting. Mr. Jamison willingly goes the extra mile to make sure the job is done.

# DYS Leadership Academy

In November of 2021, DYS launched its inaugural Leadership Academy for DYS staff. The Academy was designed and structured to provide preparatory training to existing, potential, and incoming managers and administrators at the facility level as well as approved self-referred or Department identified personnel, including Central Office, interested in leadership development and advancement.

- The broad-based comprehensive training is structured to teach and train managers and leaders to perform and carry out their duties and responsibilities effectively and efficiently.
- Through the Leadership Academy, participants are provided the opportunity to learn through a variety of strategies and practices designed to address diverse learning styles.
- Group, individual, experiential work, and learning opportunities, as well as video, interactive, and lecture strategies are used to present and convey the training material and content.

The DYS Leadership Academy is lead by the Deputy Director of Institutional Services, Ms. Alesia Allen, and co-facilitated by the Director of Training and Staff Development, Ms. Melody Nelson. The Academy includes opportunities for participants to meet and hear from DYS Executive Team members and leaders from within the Department. The participants develop Individual Leadership Plans (ILP) as well as team projects. The DYS Leadership Academy provides a Certificate of Completion, contact hours, a book on leadership, and an affiliate membership to the Council of Juvenile Justice Administrators. In FY22', DYS held two Leadership Academies.



## Leadership Academy Participants

Kelsey Artis	Lexie Spurlock
Latrice Freeman	Mark Baynard
Alicia Faire	Angelia Brooks
Frederick Moncrief	Veronica Harris
Verlisia Stafford	Sherry Maddox
LaShondra Hinton	Jared Stokes
Tonya Wilson	Eva Stowers
Cornelius Williams-Fenderson	





# Changes in Leadership

## Deputy Directors and the School Superintendent Retire from DYS

In FY22', DYS said farewell to three Deputy Directors and the DYS School Superintendent. Both Mr. David Rogers, Deputy Director of Administrative Services, and Ms. Janice Coles-Lewis, Deputy Director of Institutional Services retired in December 2021. In May 2022, Mr. Pat Pendergast, Deputy Director of Community Services retired, and in August 2022, Dr. Rafael Richardson, School Superintendent, retired from the DYS School District.

**Ms. Janice Coles-Lewis** served 42 years with the Department of Youth Services. Ms. Lewis served in a variety of capacities throughout her years at DYS including Deputy Director of Institutional Services, Youth Services Administrator, Youth Services Assistant Administrator, Campus Administrator, and Youth Services Specialist.

**Mr. David Rogers** served 30 years with the State of Alabama and 14 years with DYS. Mr. Rogers served in a variety of capacities with DYS including Deputy Director of Administrative Services, Accounting Director II, and Fiscal Manager IV.

**Mr. Pat Pendergast** served 46 years with the State of Alabama and 44 years with DYS. Mr. Pendergast served in a variety of capacities with DYS including Deputy Director of Community Services, Youth Services Screening & Placement Coordinator, and Youth Services Specialist.

**Dr. Rafael Richardson** served 25 years with the State of Alabama and served 11 years with DYS as the Superintendent of the DYS School District 210.

DYS is thankful for their many years of service and leadership to this department.

**Pictured: Retirement celebrations for Mr. Pat Pendergast, Ms. Janice Coles-Lewis, Mr. David Rogers, and Dr. Rafael Richardson**



# Welcoming New Leadership ....



**Ms. Alesia Allen** was appointed Deputy Director of Institutional Services for DYS in January 2022. Prior to her appointment, Ms. Allen served as the Executive Assistant to the Director for six years, and served as the DYS Treatment Coordinator for 11 years. Her experience spans over 35 years, including but not limited to, Juvenile Probation, Mental Health, Child Welfare, and operation of a 10-bed residential facility for adjudicated females. Ms. Allen is a Certified Correctional Executive/Juvenile (CCE/JUV) and serves as a member of the Juvenile Committee with the American Correctional Association (ACA), the Behavioral Health Committee with the Council of Juvenile Justice Administrators (CJJA), and the Alabama Department of Human Resources State Quality Assurance committee.



**Mr. Shawn Stinson** was appointed Deputy Director of Administration & Contract Services for DYS in May 2022. Mr. Stinson has been employed with the State of Alabama since 2005 in various fiscal and administrative capacities. Prior to his appointment at DYS, Mr. Stinson served as the Fiscal Manager for the Mental Illness Division of the Alabama Department of Mental Health for 16 years and managed over \$400 million dollars in state contracts and services. Mr. Stinson received his Master's degree in Business Administration from Troy State University and a Bachelor of Science degree in Accounting from Auburn University.



**Dr. Tracy Smitherman** has been employed with the Department of Youth Services School District since 1997 in various capacities. On September 1, 2022, Dr. Smitherman was appointed as the new DYS School Superintendent. Dr. Smitherman received her Doctorate and Educational Specialist degrees in Educational Leadership, Policy, and Law from Alabama State University. She received her Master's in Administration and Supervision from Northwestern State University and a Bachelor of Science degree in Human Environmental Science from the University of Alabama. Dr. Smitherman currently serves on the Editorial Board for The Journal of Correctional Education, an Editor and Reviewer for Cognia, and an A.C.C.E.S.S. Teacher for Troy University.

Mr. Chris Narcisse was appointed Deputy Director of Community Services in January 2023 and will be highlighted in the FY23' Annual Report



# Planning for the Future



## DYS Leadership Develops Three Year Strategic Plan

In January 2022, the Alabama Department of Youth Services began the process of developing a Strategic Plan that would guide the agency for the next three years. The first step of the DYS strategic planning process included the development of a survey for feedback. DYS disseminated an electronic stakeholder survey to receive input from a variety of groups including DYS staff, DYS Board members, juvenile court judges, chief juvenile probation officers, juvenile probation officers, detention center directors, diversion program directors, contract residential providers, advocates, campus advisory board members, campus service providers, state agency partners, and State Advisory Group (SAG) members.

In February 2022, The Alabama Department of Youth Services held an in-person strategic planning meeting in Opelika, AL to review the survey results and develop the following: 1. Revised Mission Statement, 2. Revised Vision Statement, 3. Core Value Statements, and 4. Goals for the Department. The strategic planning meeting included topics that focused on leadership, perception and biases in leadership effectiveness, leadership and the listening process, active listening, effective listening in the public service/safety arena, leadership self-assessment, and leadership self-awareness. The strategic planning meeting also included break-out sessions that allowed participants to develop the revised mission, vision, and value statements as well as the overarching priorities/goals for DYS.



# DYS *Strategic* Priorities

The following priority areas, goals, and objectives were compiled from the feedback from stakeholders who participated in the surveys and from the DYS Strategic Planning Meeting.

## **PRIORITY AREA 1**

Improve organizational communication internally and with DYS stakeholders.

## **PRIORITY AREA 2**

Enhance facility operations by improving conditions of confinement, staff development, and increased programmatic activities and services.

## **PRIORITY AREA 3**

Improve educational opportunities and student performance of youth in DYS custody.

## **PRIORITY AREA 4**

Provide administrative support to contracted community residential services and diversion programs that promotes quality, effectiveness, and growth.

## **PRIORITY AREA 5**

Advance data analysis capabilities and reporting to enhance internal decision making (continuous quality improvement, resource allocation, evaluation, program effectiveness, system trends in juvenile justice).

## **PRIORITY AREA 6**

Create a quality workforce through enhanced recruitment and retention strategies, staff development and training opportunities, career advancement, and staff wellness initiatives.

## **PRIORITY AREA 7**

Secure necessary resources and technology to promote safe environments, enhance program effectiveness, and work force satisfaction.



# Building for the Future

## Mt. Meigs Campus Completes New Construction and Renovations

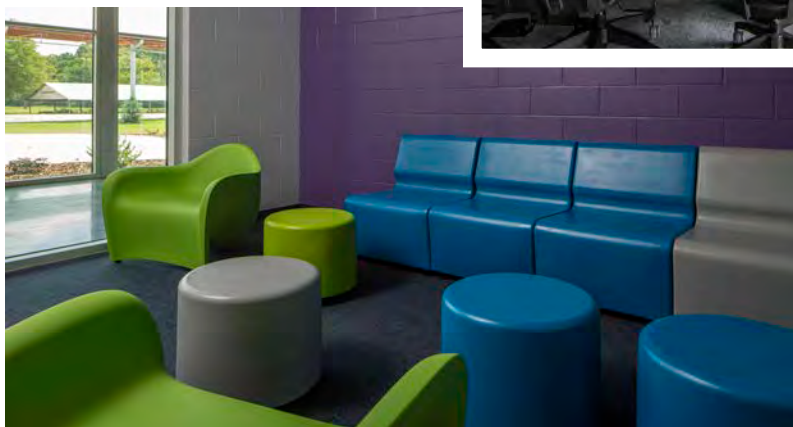
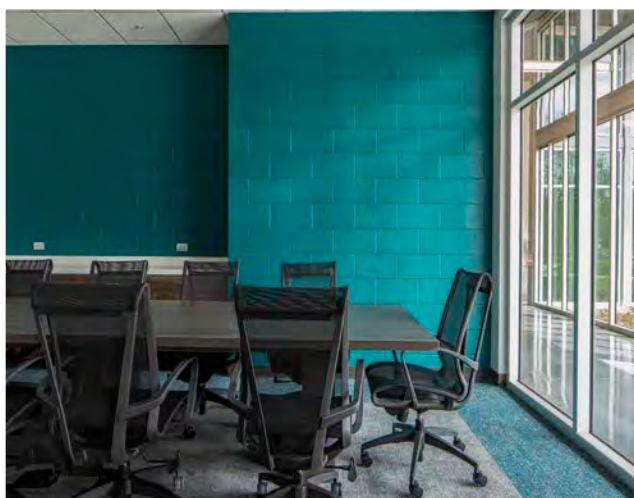
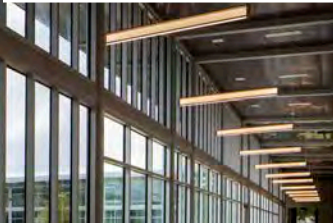
The Mt. Meigs Campus construction projects continued to progress throughout the 2022 fiscal year. The three projects which began in early 2021 include the total renovation of Wallace School, construction of the Student Development Building, and construction of an Intensive Treatment Unit (ITU). Substantial completion of Wallace School was achieved in March of 2022, and work was finalized in time for the beginning of the 2022-2023 academic year which began in August.

Work continued on the Student Development Building and ITU through the fiscal year. The therapy building includes office space and group and individual counseling spaces. ITU is a self-contained behavioral treatment facility. Sufficient progress had been made by late August to offer tours of all three buildings for the Youth Services Board during their August 26, 2022 meeting.

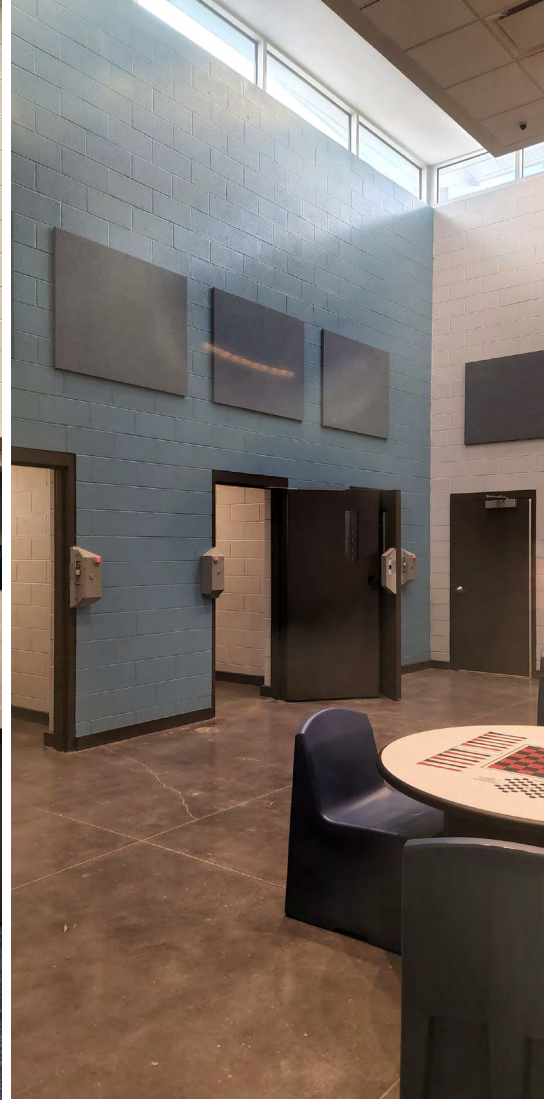




# Student *Development* Building





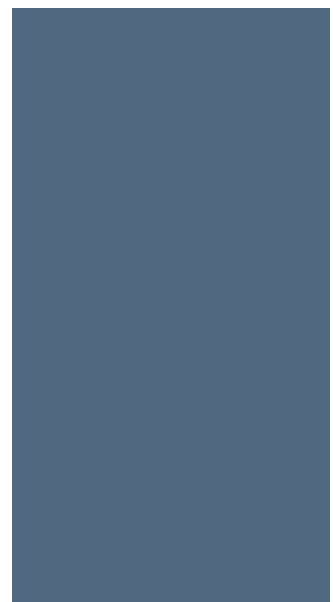


## Intensive *Treatment* Unit





# Wallace *School* Renovations





# Youth Engagement

DYS strives to engage youth in meaningful programs and services that foster positive behavior, skill building, and prosocial development. The Autauga, Mt. Meigs, and Vacca Campuses provide a wide array of programs and activities that enhance teamwork, social skills, and problem solving. These include skill development programs like Hope Inspired Ministries (H.I.M), Writing Our Stories (WOS), the Boys and Girls Club, IN2WORK, and the Black Rhinos Mentoring Program, and recreational and team building activities like fall festival and spring break programs.



## McNeel School Black Rhinos Program



The Black Rhinos of Alabama is the signature program of Lifting as We Climb Foundation. It is a mentoring program for students in public schools and juvenile justice settings in Jefferson County. The mentoring sessions are provided for school-aged males and the most recent class was formed at the McNeel School. The McNeel School Black Rhinos: The Unwritten Chapter is supported by a dedicated group of community partners such as GEAR-UP Jefferson County, which provides access to academic resources, as well as college and career readiness services. The aim is to help students realize their dreams through mentoring and educational awareness. Activities, projects, events, and workshops are held on campus and include mentoring sessions, a Black Rhinos sponsored chess tournament, poetry contests, and S.T.E.M. competitions. The McNeel School advisors are Dr. E.R. Wright, Mr. Bell, and Mr. Simmons.

## IN2WORK Program

The Mt. Meigs IN2WORK Program continues to provide students with skill development in the area of food preparation. The youth participate in weekly classes over the course of nine weeks and are taught basic kitchen skills including food handling, kitchen safety, and meal development. In FY22', the IN2WORK students assisted staff in preparing speciality items for celebration events and participated in a graduation ceremony for completing the program.





## The Boys and Girls Club

The Boys and Girls Club provides specialized programming to the Mt. Meigs boys. In FY 22', 18 Mt. Meigs boys participated in the program and 10 boys graduated. Programming includes five different modules - Passport to Manhood, Leadership/Character values, Civics, Career Launch, and Money Matters. The modules engage young boys in discussions and activities that reinforce character, leadership, and positive behavior. After completion of a module, the boys participate in a graduation ceremony where they each give a speech on what they have learned. Each youth receives a certificate of completion. Mr. Stanley Pressley, Site Director, and Ms. Stephanie Norris, Instructor/Case Manager, directs and oversees the program. **Pictured to the left: Taborie Burton, Rick Jackson, & Stanley Presley with Boys and Girls Club.**

## Mt. Meigs Hope Inspired Ministries (H.I.M.) Program

The H.I.M. Program assists DYS youth to gain the skills needed to obtain, maintain, and excel at employment. The H.I.M. staff help students hit the reset button on their lives by developing employment and life skills that will lead them to self-sufficiency. Since the program began in January 2021, 109 youth have been served, 30 youth have received employment after release, 2 went into the Armed Forces (Army and Marines), 1 went into the agriculture field, 1 is working in the car industry with Toyota in Huntsville, AL, and one is working in hospitality management in Canada.

In FY22', the Mt. Meigs Hope Inspired Ministries Program (H.I.M.) selected 55 youth to participate in the eight week program. Forty-four youth graduated from H.I.M. and received a certificate of completion. During the graduation ceremonies, each youth prepared personal remarks and a speech to the audience. **Pictured below: H.I.M. graduation ceremony.**





## DYS State Identification Pilot Project

A new pilot project was developed in 2022 to assist DYS youth with obtaining a non-driver's license state identification card. DYS partnered with Dr. Hollie Cost, Assistant Vice President of Auburn University Outreach and Public Service, and Ms. Tori Ho, Graduate Assistant from Auburn University, to participate in the project. The DYS project is part of a larger pilot program aimed at providing adults in the correctional system with a non-driver identification card prior to release. Ms. Alesia Allen and Ms. Angie Toney serve as the DYS representatives for the larger pilot program and have participated in a number of meetings facilitated by the David Mathews Center for Civic Life. The meetings have also included representatives from the Alabama Law Enforcement Agency, the Shelby County Jail, the Alabama Department of Corrections, the Alabama Department of Public Health, the Alabama Board of Pardons and Paroles, the Administrative Office of Courts, reentry organizations, and formerly incarcerated individuals.

The pilot project is led by Ms. Bridget McDonald and Ms. Tonya Wilson on the Mt. Meigs Campus. To date, DYS has issued 39 state IDs to youth in DYS custody, including 4 female youth participating in the Rite of Passage Program. The project will assist youth in obtaining the needed documentation for future employment, enrollment in post-secondary education, future housing, establishing bank accounts, and other areas.



**Pictured left to right:** Holley Cook, ALEA; Chief John Archer, ALEA; Officer Rueben Hill, Mt. Meigs Campus; Bridget McDonald, Mt. Meigs Campus; Lakeisha Kemp, ALEA; Hollie Cost, Auburn University; Angie Toney, DYS Central Office; Tonya Wilson, Mt. Meigs Campus; Rufus Washington, ALEA; and Tori Ho, Auburn University.



**Pictured:** Youth receiving state identification cards.

## Special Event Celebrations



**Pictured above:** Thanksgiving and Christmas celebrations and Fall Festival events.

# Community Partners

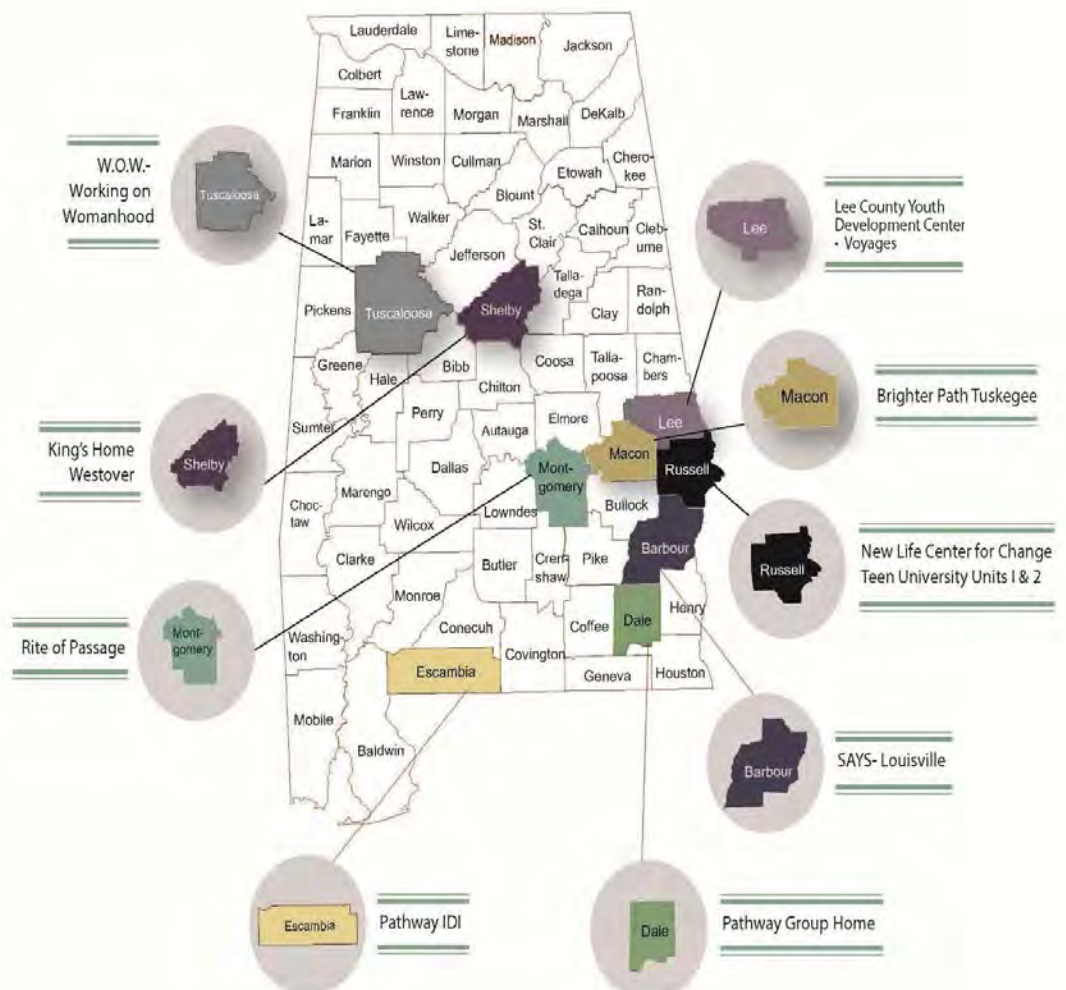
## New Provider for Medium Risk Males

Due to the increase in male youth requiring a moderate secure placement, DYS announced an emergency Request for Proposal in May of 2022. Southeast Alabama Youth Services (SAYS), in Louisville, AL was among three proposers who submitted requests to operate a 16 bed male facility. SAYS was awarded the contract and operations began in October of 2022. DYS welcomes Executive Director Tabitha Brannon and her staff to residential programming.



**Pictured:** Southeast Alabama Youth Services medium secure residential facility.

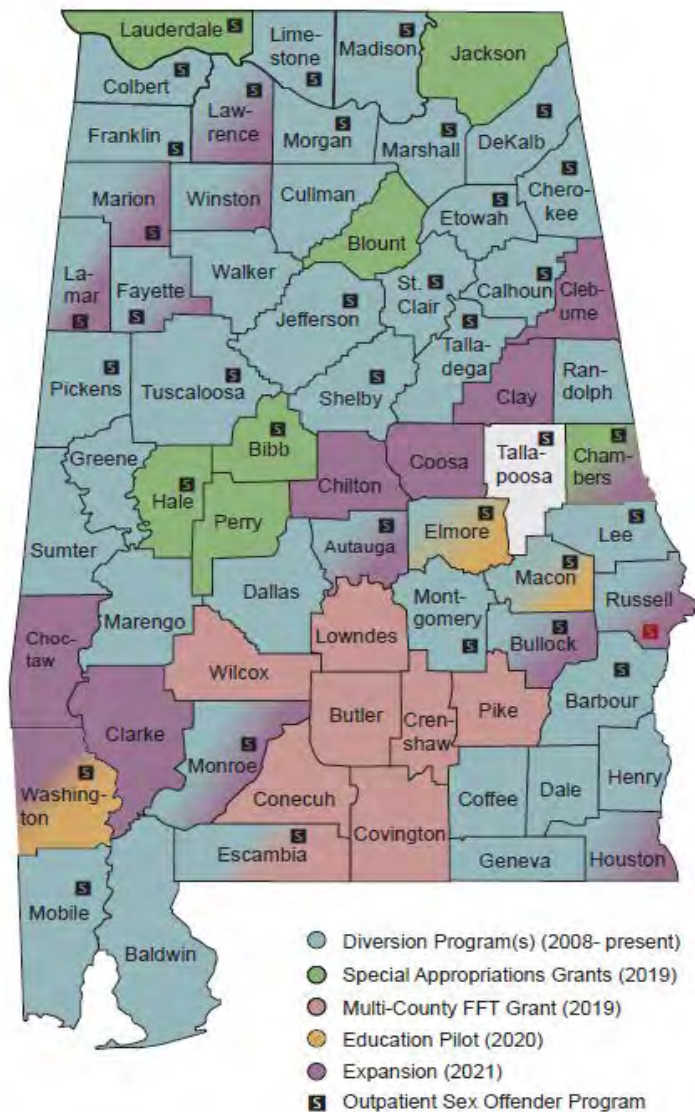
## Contracted Residential Providers





# DYS Funded Diversion Program

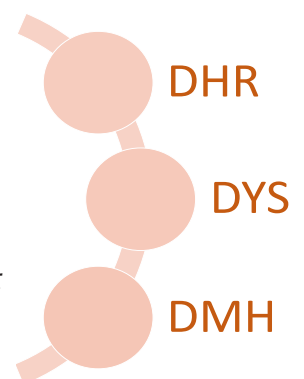
DYS has been funding community programs to divert youth from state custody for over 20 years. **In FY22', the DYS Diversion Program served 2,894 youth.** The number of these programs have expanded over the last decade and now cover the entire state of Alabama. By partnering with community providers, the DYS Diversion Grant Program serves thousands of court-involved youth and their families.



- **Seventy-two percent (72%) of the Diversion Programs are community-based intervention programs** that provide services either in the home or a community setting and guide clients on coping skills, improving relationships, becoming a contributing member of society, and assisting with other therapeutic goals that the client and family identify.
- **Thirteen percent (13%) of the Diversion Programs are considered DAY programs**, which require the youth to attend Monday through Friday during their traditional school day hours. Youth are provided with additional supports and guidance to complete their educational goals in an environment that can address their other needs as well. These programs allow students to find academic success (and other successes) with a low student-to-teacher ratio.
- **Thirteen percent (13%) of the Diversion Programs funded by DYS are residential programs.** The programs have a small number of youth, are low security programs, and are located in the community. The program length of stay for youth can range from one month to six months and is based on client need and progress in treatment.

## Serving Youth with Multi-Agency Involvement

In conjunction with the Alabama Department of Human Resources and the Alabama Department of Mental Health, DYS funds six other programs where youth have involvement in two of the three funding agencies, with a large majority of those youth involved with the courts. These programs are considered **"Our Kids"** programs and the majority of these programs are also community-based intervention programs. This inter-agency collaboration has been active for over 20 years.

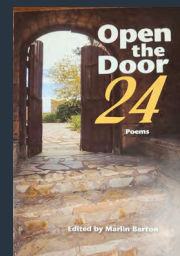


# Educational Services



## Celebrating Student Achievements

- L.B. Wallace School student D.B. placed 3rd in the University of Southern California Systems-Impacted Youth Writers Contest. This is the biggest recognition a student in our program has ever received. His poem "Poetry" will be published in a chat book by the USC Dornsife Prison Education Project, and he will also receive \$500 in prize money.
- McNeel School student B.M. received the BMN 2022-2023 Excellence Scholarship Award of \$500.00. The Black Rhinos of Alabama is the signature program of the Lifting as We Climb Foundation (LAWCF) and mentors students in public schools and juvenile justice settings in Jefferson County.
- L.B. Wallace students completed artwork that was selected to be hung at the Montgomery Museum of Fine Arts at Shakespeare Festival Park.
- Students from both L.B. Wallace and McNeel Schools participated in the Writing Our Stories Program. Student voices from the program debuted in anthologies that were published as a culmination of a thriving juvenile justice and literary arts partnership. This year's celebrations included two published anthologies from the students of L.B. Wallace School and the McNeel School and one chapbook from the students of the L.B. Wallace Schools. The chapbook is entitled "Splashes of Light and Dark," and the anthologies "Invisible Kingdom" and "Open the Door 24".



Pictured above: Writing Our Stories Program and published anthologies.

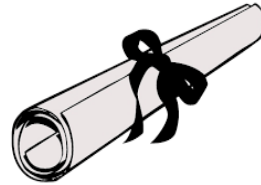


# Academic Snapshot



**15 High School Diplomas**

12 students in DYS School District and 3 students in community programs.



**25 GEDs**

21 students in DYS School District and 4 students in community programs.



**46** students passed a portion of the GED Test (43 in DYS School District, 3 in Community Programs)



**8** students enrolled in post-secondary education (6 in DYS School District, 2 in Community Programs)

## Career Technical Education

A total of 54 students at LB Wallace School and 1 student at McNeel School earned National Center for Construction Education and Research (NCCER) certificates while enrolled in the DYS School District. NCCER standardized construction and maintenance curriculum and assessments allow credentials to be tracked through NCCER's Registry System, which allows organizations and companies to track the qualifications of their craft professionals and/or check the qualifications of possible new hires. NCCER's Registry System also assists craft professionals by maintaining their records in a secure database. The table below reflects the credentialing totals in each area.



### Welding

**8** students received NCCER credentials.

**10** students passed a portion of the NCCER test.



### Carpentry

**1** student received NCCER credentials.

**20** students passed a portion of the NCCER test.



### Brick Masonry

**5** students received NCCER credentials.

**9** students passed a portion of the NCCER test.



### Microsoft

**55** students passed a portion of Microsoft Academy exams.

**4** Expert Certificates

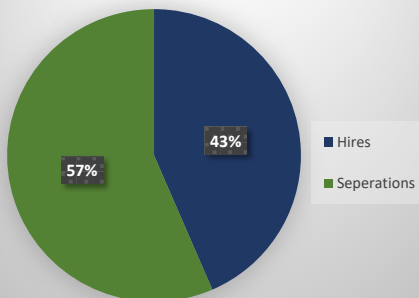
**8** Associate Certificates

# Staff Recruitment

The recruitment and retention of staff has been a priority for DYS since Covid-19. Throughout FY22', DYS participated in multiple career fairs to recruit for direct-care staff. Some of these career fairs include the Annual Job Fair hosted by Congresswoman Sewell at the Bessemer Civic Center, the Troy University Health and Social Sciences Career Fair, the Montgomery County District Attorney's 2nd Chance Job Fair, the Bullock County Job Fair, the Putting Alabama to Work Job Fair at the Birmingham Jefferson Civic Center, and the Auburn University at Montgomery Career Fair. DYS will continue to recruit staff and are appreciative of the current staff who volunteer to assist the agency in its efforts to increase the number of employees needed to work with our youth.

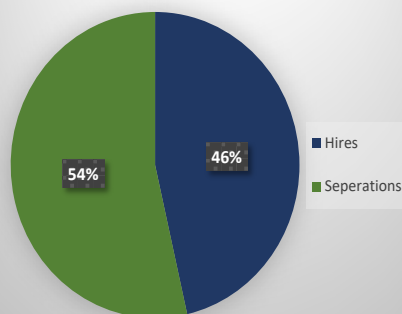
## New Hires & Separations

All Staff



In FY22', DYS employed 394 full time employees (130 being Youth Services Aides) with an overall 57% turnover rate.

Youth Service Aides

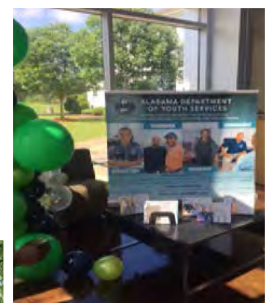


For Youth Services Aides, DYS had a 54% turnover rate with 65 new hires and 75 separations.



## DYS Hosts On-Site Hiring Events

In FY22', DYS hosted on-site pre-orientation hiring events to recruit for Youth Services Aide positions. Potential employees were able to receive a tour of the Mt. Meigs and Vacca Campuses and receive an overview of the job opportunities available through DYS.





# Staff Recognition

During the 1st week of May, the DYS campuses and the Central Office hosted a variety of events to celebrate all of the DYS employees who are vital to the agency and are the cornerstone of our operation. DYS is thankful for all of the hard work our employees do each and every day. DYS strives to make a difference in the lives of the youth we serve, and it is through the dedication and determination of the DYS staff that this is made possible.

## Autauga Campus

At the Autauga Campus, staff received special treats throughout the week which included ice cream on Monday, tacos on Thursday, and goody bags on Friday. On Wednesday, May 4th, staff participated in the Autauga Staff Appreciation Ceremony and luncheon. Staff received pins of service and awards from the youth.

## Mt. Meigs Campus

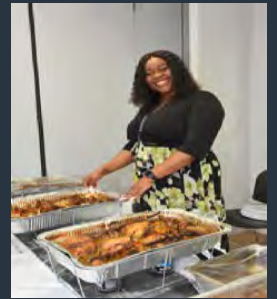
The Mt. Meigs Campus provided treats and held a BBQ cookout and kickball game for staff. On Tuesday, May 3rd, staff participated in the Mt. Meigs Staff Appreciation Ceremony where the youth from the IN2WORK program cooked and served breakfast for the staff. Staff also received service pins and certificates.

## Vacca Campus

At the Vacca Campus, staff had a treats and sweets dessert bar on Monday, a staff breakfast for 3rd shift on Wednesday, and goody bags on Friday. On Thursday, May 5th, staff participated in a Vacca Choice Awards Ceremony where staff received service pins and special awards voted on by the youth. The Vacca Youth Executive League also assisted with the ceremony.

## Central Office

On Friday, May 6th, Central Office staff participated in a service pin ceremony followed by a BBQ luncheon. Staff received service pins for 5, 10, 15, 20, 25 and 30 years of service.





## Staff Retention Initiatives

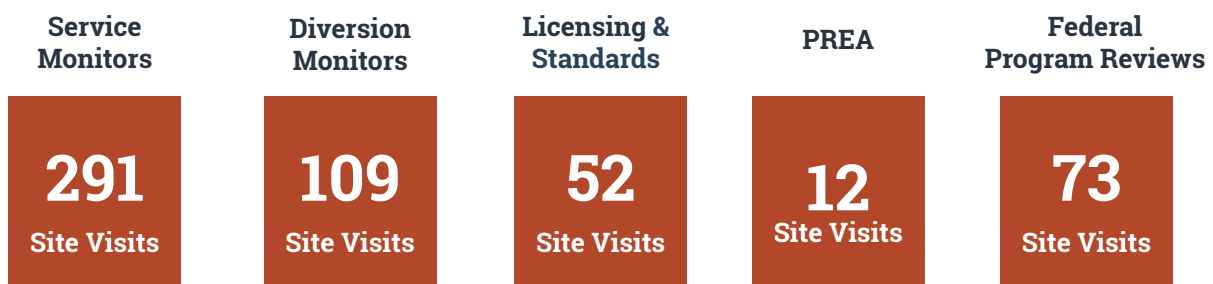
- Beginning in 2022, DYS offered a quarterly retention incentive bonus to direct care staff classifications. This bonus was offered to these classifications to improve agency culture, employee engagement, and employee retention within the direct care classifications. DYS offered bonuses to twenty-five direct care staff per quarter. The bonuses allowed staff and individuals working on DYS campuses to nominate staff members in specific classifications as recipients of the bonus. Staff nominated must have performed an act or actions that positively impact youth in DYS custody or significantly impact departmental operations or another act such as going above and beyond by being a team player or volunteering.
- DYS transitioned to a 10-hour work schedule for campus staff in July 2022 as part of an effort to address employees' expressed concerns, provide opportunities to have additional weekends off, and to increase the work-life balance for direct care staff.
- The DYS Institutional Services Division implemented a new DYS Juvenile Response Team (JRT). The JRT is a group of individuals who are representative of the facilities and who provide specialized training, respond to crisis situations to assist in mass disturbances, special unannounced searches, and specific tasks as assigned. The Team is led by a JRT Coordinator.
- Starting salary was raised 2-steps in FY22' to help recruit and retain direct care workers.



# Programmatic Oversight

## Community Service Monitoring

The Community Services staff monitor and provide technical assistance to private provider contractors (PPC) and diversion grant programs across the State. Each PPC receives a minimum of 3 visits per month from their assigned Service Monitor. In addition, the Community Services Division provides reviews and audits for PREA, Federal Programs, Diversion Monitors, Education Advocates, and Licensing & Standards. These visits create a system of multiple reviewers who are able to observe facilities for program compliance and the welfare of youth in DYS custody. Total number of oversight & monitoring visits for FY22' is provided below.



## Grievance "Warm Line" Established for Diversion Residential Programs



The DYS Community Service Grievance Line was developed to expand youth advocacy involvement to include juveniles not in DYS custody and reside in facilities licensed by DYS. The "warm-line" provides residents and their advocates, who feel their concerns have not been adequately addressed through the internal grievance process at non-custodial facilities, an avenue to communicate with DYS any action, incident, living condition, dispute, or application of any policy they believe to be a violation of DYS standards or policy.

The DYS Grievance Line is available Monday through Friday. Calls will be answered within 24 hours of receipt, except weekends and holidays, in which case the calls will be answered within 72 hours. The full time Licensing and Standards staff rotate the responsibility of monitoring the Grievance Line. All follow-up will be conducted by Licensing Representatives assigned to audit the facility by district.

## Advocacy Unit

The Advocacy Unit is responsible for responding to, reporting, and following up on verbal and written complaints or grievances from youth in DYS custody.

- **In FY22', the Advocacy Unit made 480 visits to the DYS facilities and contracted community providers.**

The DYS grievance process is a problem solving process for youth to grieve an action, incident, living condition, dispute, or application of any departmental policy or practice which they believe to be unjust. The DYS Advocates respond to the grievances by working directly with the youth in order to resolve any issues or concerns the youth may have while in DYS custody.

The ultimate goal of the advocacy process is to resolve grievances within a reasonable amount of time in a way that addresses issues or concerns of the youth fairly.

# Quality Assurance



The Office of Quality Assurance is responsible for the implementation and oversight of the agency's quality control measures to increase accountability, accurate data reporting, and transparency. The overall goal for the office is to ensure agency goals are met and that all programs consistently provide effective services that help our youth achieve meaningful outcomes. The Office of Quality Assurance oversees the implementation of facility improvement planning, PbS data collection, and incident reporting.

- The Office of Quality Assurance utilizes the **DYS Incident Reporting Information System** to collect, analyze, and report performance outcomes for the Mt. Meigs, Vacca, and Autauga Campuses.
- The Office of Quality Assurance utilizes the **Performance-based Standards (PbS) data** dashboard and web-based portal to collect and report performance-based outcomes in October and April each year. This reporting is additional information used in conjunction with the monthly Incident Report Summaries provided to the campuses.

In FY22', DYS collected the following information to be utilized in reporting and analyzing performance-based outcome measures:



**259** Staff Climate Surveys

**210** Youth Climate Surveys

**153** Youth Reentry Surveys

**127** Youth Record Reviews



# Youth Services

## Financial Statement

	Fiscal Year 2018	Fiscal Year 2019	Fiscal Year 2020	Fiscal Year 2021	Fiscal Year 2022
<b>REVENUES</b>					
General Fund	5,704,537	6,704,537	6,704,537	12,704,537	6,704,537
Children First Trust Fund	8,107,074	8,107,317	8,107,318	10,126,407	10,432,066
Education Trust Fund	50,850,897	51,230,341	53,588,339	53,588,339	54,037,009
Special Revenue	30,682,521	29,216,241	16,991,569	19,255,362	25,824,338
Special Programming for Achievement Network (SPAN)- ETF line item approp.	3,565,732	3,565,732	3,565,732	3,565,732	3,565,732
<b>TOTAL FUNDS AVAILABLE</b>	<b>98,910,761</b>	<b>98,824,168</b>	<b>88,957,495</b>	<b>99,240,377</b>	<b>100,563,682</b>
<b>EXPENDITURES</b>					
Personnel Costs	18,305,555	18,961,903	19,079,086	19,169,641	18,693,971
Employee Benefits	8,268,437	8,298,259	8,243,059	7,993,256	7,436,498
Travel In-State	44,641	42,352	22,943	28,404	55,941
Travel Out-of-State	12,639	20,505	9,561	7,764	17,926
Repairs & Maintenance	1,129,259	973,797	803,147	1,244,228	992,635
Rentals & Leases	230,162	180,834	138,672	200,562	200,616
Utilities & Communications	1,458,019	1,506,874	1,501,402	1,358,277	1,351,706
Professional Services	14,888,263	13,856,095	11,460,408	15,964,452	15,290,548
Operating Expenses	1,524,830	2,048,162	1,995,210	2,370,088	2,038,996
Transportation Equip Operations	216,366	232,460	174,232	229,685	314,534
Grants & Benefits	47,617,672	47,781,328	29,620,845	32,559,362	38,918,203
Grants & Benefits transferred to SPAN	3,565,732	3,565,732	3,565,732	3,565,732	3,565,732
Capital Outlay	223,930	136,678	580,734	5,403,343	9,233,323
Transportation Equip Purchases	46,264	16,798	69,916	71,695	106,587
Other Equipment Purchases	486,607	1,248,662	491,345	772,957	635,652
<b>TOTAL EXPENDITURES</b>	<b>98,018,374</b>	<b>98,870,438</b>	<b>77,756,292</b>	<b>90,939,445</b>	<b>98,852,868</b>

# School District Financial Statement

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REVENUES	Fiscal Year 2018	Fiscal Year 2019	Fiscal Year 2020	Fiscal Year 2021	Fiscal Year 2022
General Fund	-	-	-	-	-
Education Trust Fund	6,396,945	6,522,499	5,414,481	6,733,348	7,257,203
Special Revenue	307,237	416,836	315,521	508,342	322,480
<b>TOTAL FUNDS AVAILABLE</b>	<b>6,704,182</b>	<b>6,939,335</b>	<b>5,730,002</b>	<b>7,241,690</b>	<b>7,579,683</b>
<b>EXPENDITURES</b>					
Personnel Costs	3,780,114	3,779,776	3,749,097	4,010,322	4,307,243
Employee Benefits	1,347,673	1,330,563	1,325,573	1,377,421	1,482,615
Travel In-State	8,463	10,187	1,894	6,935	11,354
Travel Out-of-State	-	-	-	-	-
Repairs & Maintenance	3,893	5,545	7,338	82,227	37,132
Rentals & Leases	12,211	12,531	8,638	11,413	12,745
Utilities & Communications	162,572	60,000	110	-	1,287
Professional Services	36,366	89,705	82,551	68,350	88,717
Operating Expenses	134,536	217,859	150,889	291,867	201,375
Transportation Equip Operations	787	689	-	-	-
Grants & Benefits	1,103,044	1,272,000	290,472	1,010,661	1,234,779
Capital Outlay	-	-	-	-	-
Transportation Equip Purchases	-	-	-	-	-
Other Equipment Purchases	89,375	131,836	113,440	382,494	202,435
<b>TOTAL EXPENDITURES</b>	<b>6,679,032</b>	<b>6,910,691</b>	<b>5,730,002</b>	<b>7,241,690</b>	<b>7,579,683</b>

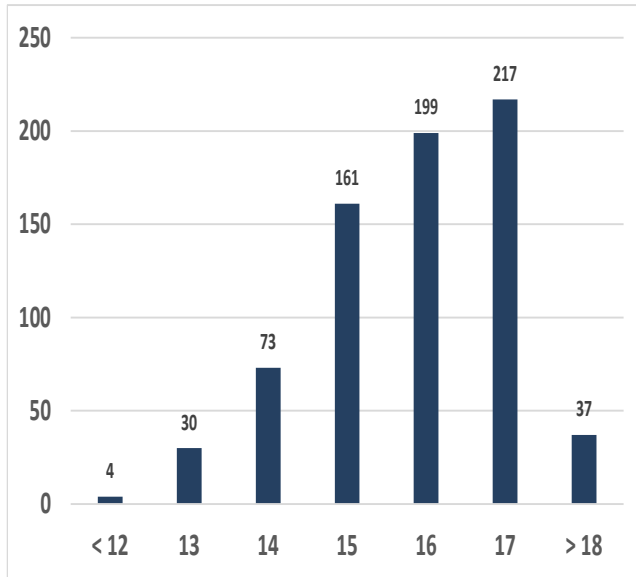
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# DYS BY THE NUMBERS

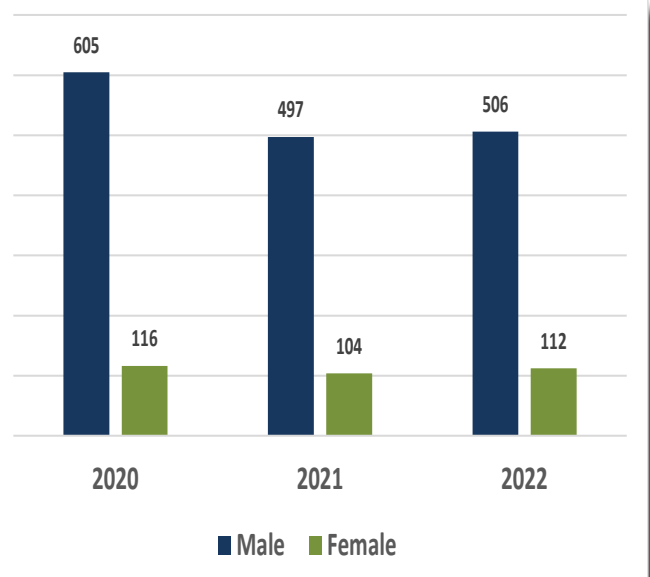
## YOUTH BY AGE

Over the past 3 years, the demographics of youth admissions remains consistent. The age group with the most youth admissions continues to be 17 years of age followed by 16 and 15 years of age.



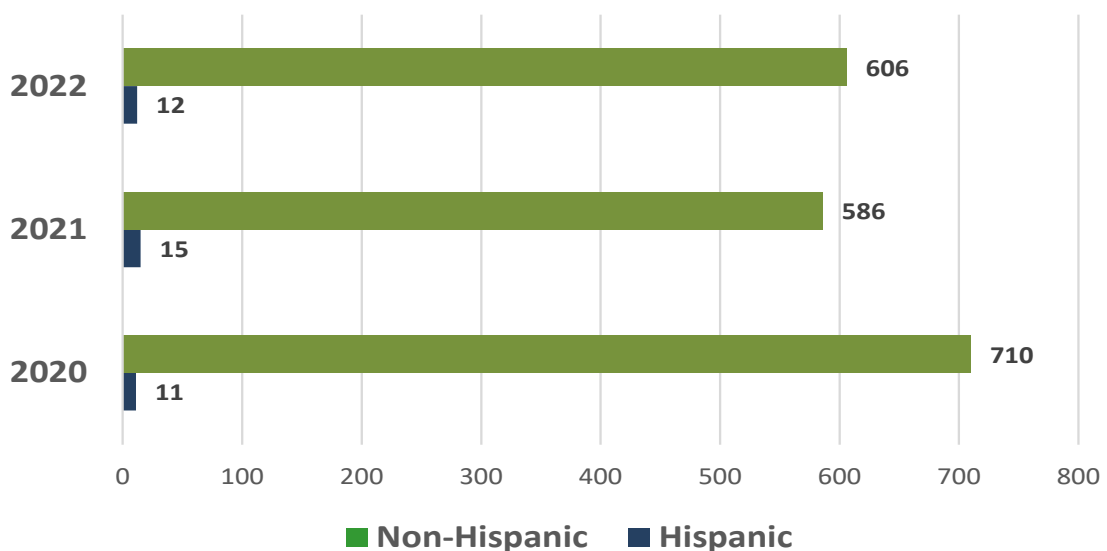
## YOUTH BY GENDER

Female admissions for FY22' was 18% of the overall population, which is slightly up from 17% in FY21' and 16% in FY20'.



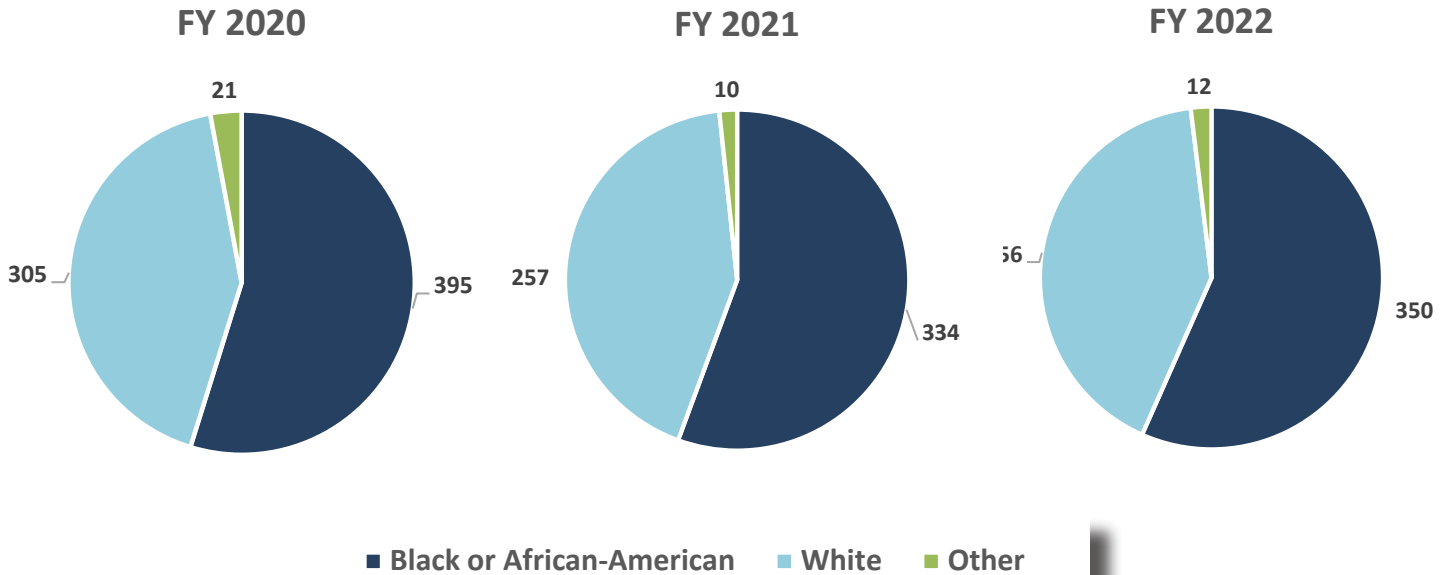
## YOUTH BY ETHNICITY

In regards to ethnicity, 1.9% of youth were identified as Hispanic in FY22', which is slightly less than 2.4% in FY21' and up from 1.5% in FY20'.



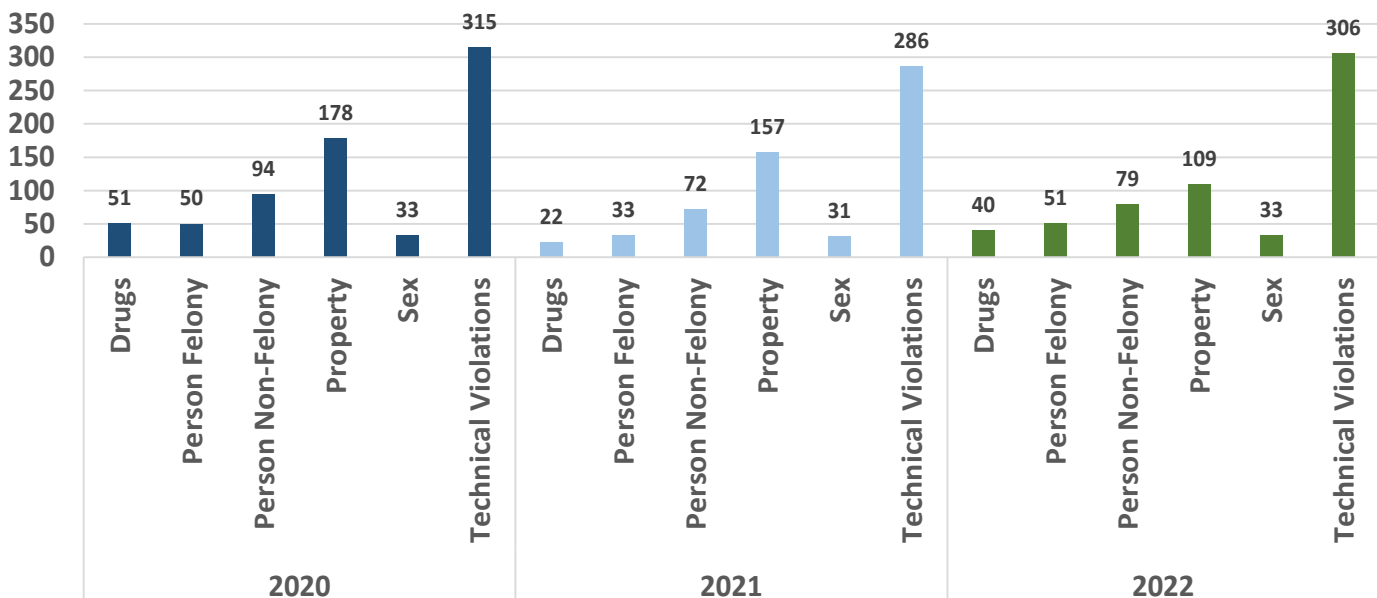
## YOUTH BY RACE

For youth admissions by race in FY22', 57% were Black/African-American, 41% were White, and 2% were Other. The demographics for race remain consistent with the two previous years. FY21', 56% were Black/African-American, 43% were White, and 1% were Other. In FY20', 55% were Black/African-American, 42% were White, and 3% were Other.



## YOUTH BY OFFENSE

Over the past 3 years, technical violations have been the number one reason for admission to DYS. Technical violations include violation of probation. Juvenile courts commit youth who are currently on probation and either commit a new offense or violate the terms of probation. These youth violations are often identified as technical violations. Property crimes continue to be the 2nd highest, but have been on the decline from FY20' to FY22'. Person non-felony offenses continue to be the 3rd highest offense for admission.





# ORGANIZATIONAL CHART

