In January 2006, South Carolina's Department of Juvenile Justice (DJJ) released its second "Report Card" summarizing DJJ's progress toward keeping the community safe, holding offenders accountable to victims and the community, and reducing the risk of re-offending through skill development.

The report card demonstrates a "new way of doing business" predicated on the principles of balanced and restorative justice and agency accountability. The report card celebrates system strengths, including improved employability of at-risk juveniles, enhanced services to victims of juvenile crime, and increased utilization of restorative alternatives for first-time juvenile offenders. At the same time, it is an effective tool for identifying areas that may be profitably addressed, including improving the employability of at-risk juveniles, reducing overcrowded juvenile detention centers, and slowing down the high rate of incarceration in DJJ's long-term residential facilities.

A Report Card to the Citizens of South Carolina

DJJ was one of four jurisdictions selected in 2003 to participate in "The Performance Measures for the Juvenile Justice System: A National Demonstration Project" funded by the U.S. Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention and conducted by the American Prosecutor's Research Institute (APRI). APRI collaborated with Florida Atlantic University's Balanced and Restorative Justice Project and the National Center for Juvenile Justice to develop juvenile justice performance measures and to field-test a strategy for collecting, processing, and reporting performance outcome data.

The report card is presented in a booklet format designed to look similar to the report cards most of us can recall from our own school days. The data are presented in a clear and orderly fashion that present an informative snapshot of DJJ and its outcomes.

To provide the proper context for understanding the scope and nature of South Carolina's juvenile justice system, the report card includes a brief description of the juvenile justice system and processes and characteristics of the cases included in the report (see Table 1).

Outcomes are reported in four categories:

1. Customer services—victims of juvenile crime, juvenile offenders, and communities.
2. Accountability—restitution paid, community service completed, and victim satisfaction.
3. Competency development—resistance to drug and alcohol use, school participation, employability training, and citizen participation.
4. Community safety—number of violent and serious cases handled by DJJ, the rate of secure detention, and recidivism within two years of case closing.

Restitution. Restitution was ordered in 701 (11%) of the cases closed by DJJ and Solicitor's Arbitration Programs in 2004-2005. Of the over $357,000 ordered, over $223,000 was collected (62%).

Community Service. Restorative work service was ordered in 2,650 (43%) of the cases closed by DJJ and Solicitor's Arbitration Programs in 2004-2005. Almost 78,000 hours were ordered and more than 67,000 hours (87%) were successfully completed.

Enrollment in School. Juveniles were enrolled in school or vocational training at the time of case closure in the vast majority (87%) of the cases closed in 2004-2005.

Table 1: Characteristics of Cases Closed by South Carolina Department of Juvenile Justice 2004-2005 N = 6,190

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Gender</th>
<th>Race</th>
<th>Age</th>
<th>Most Frequent Referral Offense</th>
<th>Length of DJJ Supervision (months)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Male</td>
<td>White</td>
<td>Average 1.58</td>
<td>Disturbing Schools</td>
<td>Average 7.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Female</td>
<td>Black</td>
<td>Median 16.0</td>
<td>Simple Assault and Battery Shoplifting</td>
<td>Median 4.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Mode 18</td>
<td>Simple Assault</td>
<td>Mode 3.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Youngest 6.8</td>
<td>Possession of Marijuana</td>
<td>Minimum 1 Maximum 99.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Oldest 20.4</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Report Card Highlights: The Report Card for 2005 summarized the performance of South Carolina's juvenile justice system in a broad range of categories, including:

- **Diversion.** More than 4,800 cases were diverted from formal DJJ intervention through the Solicitor's Arbitration Program, an increase of about 4% from the previous year and a 14% increase from 2000-2001.
- **Victim Notification.** DJJ notified more than 13,000 victims of crime regarding the court processing status of the offenders related to their victimization, an increase of 23% from 2003-2004.
A New Era of Openness for South Carolina's Juvenile Justice System

It should be pointed out that no one from outside DJJ requested or demanded an accounting of the agency's performance. The decision to document and report performance measures was an internal decision reflecting a desire to share with the citizens of South Carolina DJJ's new approach to juvenile justice and to embrace a theme of public accountability. Bottom line—South Carolina's DJJ took the initiative to produce a Juvenile Justice Report Card because it was the right thing to do.

DJJ took a leap of faith and issued their first report card in 2005, posting it on the DJJ website for all to see. Dr. Kathleen Hayes, Chief of Staff for the South Carolina Department of Juvenile Justice, sums up the positive attitude of DJJ toward performance measures by stating: "We can't help the system get better unless we let the public in.”

In fact, according to Dr. Hayes, the public response has been very positive. The initial Report Card received more than 12,000 "hits” after it was placed online. Far from turning the public away from the juvenile justice system, DJJ has witnessed an increase in the recruitment of volunteers since the publication of the first report card.

The Charleston Post and Courier recognized DJJ’s willingness to open up and share outcomes in an article written after release of the first report card. "Though dubbed a 'report card', the study does not assign grades. Instead it is a collection of data that sheds light on an agency with a long history of secrecy." 2

Bill Byars, Director of South Carolina’s Department of Juvenile Justice, said as much in his introduction to the Report Card for 2004: "We hope you will take the time to study this report card, to gain a better understanding of how the juvenile justice system works and performs in the state. Please join in our efforts to help make communities safer, better satisfy victims of crime, and to better prepare juvenile offenders for productive, law abiding lives in their communities." 3

The need for open communication with the public was not lost on Solicitor Thomas Pope of the 16th Judicial Circuit Court: "As a father, I can tell you that report cards are sometimes hidden in book bags. I think it is important that this one be available to the public and that we be quick to share it with everyone. 4

For Dr. Karry Guillory, DJJ’s Deputy Director for Community Services, the report card provides a mechanism for helping the people of South Carolina to understand the juvenile justice system and what DJJ does. The report card provides a way of documenting the return on taxpayer dollars for juvenile justice services. It helps highlight the array of services and interventions available to South Carolina’s at-risk youth population. The focus on victim involvement illustrates DJJ’s commitment to victims of crime.

Solicitor Jay Hodge of the 4th Judicial Circuit Court, while initially skeptical, has quickly come to appreciate the fact that the report card helps agencies "see where they are and where they are going. He points out, for example, that the report card is an excellent tool for informing the budget process. DJJ planners—and others—now have the data they need to take to the legislators to make informed and targeted requests for funding.

The Juvenile Justice Report Card is a key element of a "new way of doing business" for South Carolina's Department of Juvenile Justice. The report card is a tangible and very public manifestation of DJJ's commitment to the principles of balanced and restorative justice and to public accountability of state agencies to the citizens of South Carolina. DJJ has demonstrated both the feasibility and utility of measuring performance in the juvenile justice system and is actively serving as a beacon for other states and local jurisdictions interested in measuring performance, reporting outcomes, and enhancing their juvenile justice processes and programs.

South Carolina Juvenile Justice:
Ahead of the Curve

The South Carolina Department of Juvenile Justice is one of a handful of jurisdictions across the nation that have taken what Dennis Maloney and Caren Harp have called the "next and necessary step" for the juvenile justice system. 5 When DJJ was selected to participate in the APRI "Performance Measures" initiative, only three juvenile court jurisdictions—Allegheny County, Pa., De Schutes County, Ore., and Washtenaw County, Mich.—were actively collecting and reporting performance-based outcome data. When DJJ released its first Report Card in 2004, it was one of only two states (the other state was Pennsylvania) that produced and published a statewide report on the performance of the juvenile justice system. Since that time, several other jurisdictions have produced juvenile justice report cards or initiated efforts to do so. 6 However, only South Carolina and Pennsylvania have committed to measuring and reporting outcomes for the entire state. By vigorously and confidently taking the "next and necessary step," the South Carolina DJJ is distinguishing itself as a bold and innovative leader in juvenile justice nationwide.

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End Notes
2 The other demonstration sites were Allegheny County (Pittsburgh) Pa., Cook County (Chicago) 111., and Deschutes County, Ore. For more information on the APRI performance measures initiative, contact Delores Ward at (703) 539-4253.
3 A copy of the Report Card for 2005 may be obtained from DJJ or online at http://www.state.sc.us/djj/pdfs/2005-report-card.pdf.
4 Please note that recidivism in this instance applies only to juveniles released from South Carolina’s residential facilities and thus represents a high-risk subset of all juveniles under DJJ jurisdiction.
7 See Barbour, note 5.
9 Belknap County, NH; Cook County, IL; 5th Judicial District of MT; the Confederated Salish and Kootenai Tribes, Flathead Reservation, MT; Kenosha County, WI; Georgia Department of Juvenile Justice; Lucas County, OH; Marquette County, MI; Sacramento County, CA; Tompkins County, NY; Washenaw County, MI and 20 individual county probation departments in Pennsylvania.