



EDU TOPICS

Virginia Department of Juvenile Justice

July, 2017

Goal 5: Ensure Compliance In Educational Programs



Director's Message
Dr. Lisa Floyd

The Division of Education is strategic and purposeful in planning programs to meet the needs of youth. This article highlights Goal 5 of our Strategic Plan: Ensure Compliance in Educational Programs.

We use general and federal funds including Title I, Title II, Perkins, and Special Education grants to support instructional programming. We offer an array of high school completion routes that include an Advanced Studies Diploma, Standard Diploma, Modified Standard Diploma, Applied Studies

Diploma, Penn Foster Diploma, and a General Educational Development® certificate. Last week, we proudly honored 32 DJJ residents who earned Virginia diplomas, 18 who earned a GED and 14 who earned a Penn Foster high school diploma.

We also provide quality post-secondary opportunities to obtain certificates, credentials, and/or college course credits. Rhonda Jackson-Smith, Director of Post-Secondary Programs, aligns post-secondary opportunities to high school course offerings and collaborates with vendors who provide services to our youth. At our ceremony June 28, 50 post-secondary residents received letters recognizing the achievement for obtaining credentials, certifications and coursework.

Credentialing, competencies, and
(See "Goal 5," page 2)



Instructor Timeka Whitehead works with a Bon Air resident in her classroom.

Whitehead's Pupils Have Always Sensed A Kindred Spirit

Timeka Whitehead earned her degree in science from Elizabeth City State University in North Carolina, certain that she would fulfill her longtime dream of becoming a scientist.

Then one day she went with her mother who was substitute teaching a class of 3- and 4-year-olds with severe mental disabilities. "I watched my mom in action," Whitehead recalls. "It was the little things: They were so happy about learning something new. You could see the brightness in the kids' eyes. The teachers were like family."

(See "Whitehead," page 2)

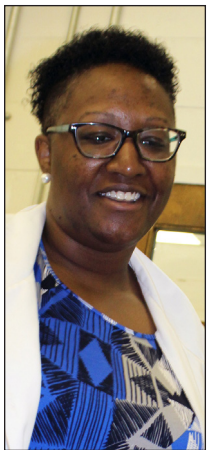
Strategic Plan Goals

- 1 Commit to Recruitment, Retention, and Evaluation of Quality Staff
- 2 Provide Quality Instructional Practices
- 3 Develop/Maintain Effective Communication Among Stakeholders
- 4 Establish and Implement Data Analysis
- 5 Ensure Compliance in Educational Programs

Whitehead

Teaching had never interested Whitehead before that day. But now she was hooked.

Timeka visited a friend in Warren, NJ, just west of New York City, where she could experience a more urban atmosphere, something else that always had appealed to her. She got a job teaching pre-schoolers at the private Goddard School, where she stayed for eight years. “I loved it, but the cost of living was very high. So I decided to return to school.” Still hoping to pursue her interest in science, not to mention a higher salary, she enrolled at Montclair State University in New Jersey, transferring to Rutgers University where she earned a degree in microbiology. But the teaching bug was still gnawing.



“I decided to teach again temporarily until I could find something science-related,” she says. “I got a phone call from Newark Public Schools. They wanted a full-time teacher. I went to the interview in jeans and a T-shirt. I did a ‘demo lesson’ in front of the chemistry class. They hired me on the spot. People thought I was crazy.”

But it was in an urban area as she had always wanted, and “the money was great.” In her first days, the students came to her and predicted she would leave after only a few days. “You can understand why they said that,” Whitehead says, “because in the first three months of that year, they had already been through six teachers. But I could relate to them. I was raised in a single-parent home. I showed them that I cared, that I understood. We talked not only about the subject at hand, but about them, too. I trusted them until they proved otherwise. That took them by surprise.”

She ended up staying four years in Newark, but began missing home in Franklin, VA. She returned, hoping to find work nearer to family. She learned that there were teaching jobs available in the Department of Corrections and with DJJ. Finding that her Newark experience was a natural fit, she joined DJJ this past fall, where she was pleasantly surprised by the much better teacher-student ratio.

So far, she loves teaching DJJ’s residents. “There are always challenging days,” she admits. “But whenever they occur, I keep telling myself: These are the same kids I had in Newark ... they just got caught.”

“I know I can’t save them all, but that’s not my goal,” Whitehead says. “My goal is to deal with each kid one at a time. Even at the end of the day, if a kid says, ‘That’s the teacher that always smiles,’ that’s good enough for me.”



Lora Taylor teaches a cosmetology class at Bon Air JCC.

Goal 5

enrollment data are reviewed and analyzed to monitor the effectiveness of the Division’s career and technical education programs:

- W!SE Financial Literacy Certification Test provides high school students with access to financial education and the opportunity to become certified financially literate.
- Workplace Readiness Skills prepares students for entry into the workforce. The 21 essential workplace readiness skills were identified by the Commonwealth of Virginia.
- Barbering and Cosmetology Examination prepares the students to work or apprentice in a local barber shop or beauty salon. This exam requires 840 hours of instruction per semester.

English as a Second Language service plans align World-class Instructional Design and Assessment (WIDA) standards to content curriculum. The service model includes scheduling of appropriate services delivered by endorsed personnel.

Director of Special Education and Gifted Programs Jill Becker oversees the special education process and Section 504 plans to monitor adherence to state and federal requirements. The building level special education team monitors the implementation of that process to ensure the needs of students are being met. Internal and state special education audits are conducted to guarantee application and fidelity of the program. Audits conducted since January of 2015 have shown that we have virtually eliminated any non-compliance citation from the Virginia Department of Education.

The past five *EduTopics* newsletters have provided a summary of strategies used to address each of the five goals of the Education Strategic Plan, specifically targeting the needs of the complicated and challenged youth we serve. We thank the dedicated and talented professionals who are enthusiastic and passionate about improving the lives of youth in our care. It is my pleasure to work with this team and build on the progress we have made.