
what's up doc?



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by Dr. Mary Livers

Hello, OJJ Family:

It's Friday! Did ya'll earn your pay this week? I am betting you did! We in OJJ are lean and not mean. In fact, we're a pretty good bunch if you ask me. And whenever I get a chance, I say that to anybody who will listen. I will keep saying it because I know you work hard, I know you are dedicated state employees and I am proud to be associated with you.

Well, the legislative session began on Monday and it is going to be a very interesting year. Of course, you know the two big issues this year are the major reforms the Governor has recommended: education reform, and pension reform. I listened to the education bill as it was presented to the education committee. The bill is very bold in its recommendations, and represents a major shift in how education will move forward in our state. The testimony on both sides has been interesting and varied. The political process in this country can be messy at times but we live in a great country. We have the right to say what we think and engage in the process. I know that we all will be affected by whatever decisions are made. As a good citizen, I hope that you will learn about these initiatives and make up your own mind as to how you think of them. You do have the right to let your elected representative know how you feel about these bills. In any event, we pray that our leaders will act with courage and in the best interest for our great state.

On Tuesday, I presented our budget to the House Appropriation Committee. Our budget calls for a \$24 million dollar reduction. Basically, it is a reduction in funding for personnel, a reduction in 30 staff, a reduction in contract services, and a reduction of supplies etc. There is no money for new vehicles, or major repairs. So, we keep moving forward improving what we do have. We've already shown there is a lot that we can do to make improvements that doesn't cost money. So that's what we want to keep doing. Keep up the good work.

On Thursday, I went to the Celebration of Change at Swanson. It was good to see a lot of the staff from the Monroe, Shreveport and Tallulah P and P office, as well as the staff and youth at Swanson. We had a great time and it was a beautiful day in many ways. I stayed in Monroe Thursday night and was able to catch the news, the event was well covered by the media. We had two television stations present and the coverage was very positive. The staff and the young men at SCY did a great job and we were very proud. Today some of the youth are competing at a track and field competition. It is a warm day up here and I hope they are drinking plenty of fluids. We are anxious to see how the day went.

Dr. Girard Melancon and I went to the Tallulah P and P office on Friday morning and we had ourselves a Town Hall Meeting. As ya'll know, it's a small office, so we could meet in the break room. We found the staff there doing well and in good spirits. It was nice to spend time there and we promise to get back again as soon as we can. We highly recommend the Mexican Restaurant almost next door to our P and P office, it was really good. Thanks to Ms. Ruth Stephens and the Tallulah P and P staff, you are doing a great job.

St. Patrick's Day - I highly recommend that you do not drink the green beer; nothing good can come from green beer early in the morning.

Have a great weekend. And, thanks for all you do every day to meet our mission. You are awesome!

Sincerely, "Doc" *Dr. Mary Livers*

Mary L. Livers, MSW, PH.D, Deputy Secretary